COMMONWEAL

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March 24, 1995

St. Charles Seminary
Carthagena, Ohio

SPECIAL REPENTANCE ISSUE

WHO'S FORGIVING WHOM?

Gordon D. Marino

You can't preserve the family if there ain't one

PATRICK T. MURPHY

CHANT AROUND THE CLOCK

Ralph Thibodeau

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CORRESPONDENCE

Timid church press

Seaford, N.Y.

To the Editors: The three admirable forums on "Religion & the Media" reported in your issue of February 24 neglected one angle: Catholics need the secular media to report clerical misdeeds because the church press refuses to break the news.

Without the *Baltimore Sun* in 1976, no donor would have learned that the Pallotines were investing mission donations in Florida real estate. It took brazen New York reporters to disclose that Father Bruce Ritter was siphoning Covenant House money.

In his postscript, Monsignor Francis Maniscalco states that church media help make the church credible. Sorry, the diocesan organs hide serious scandal until the secular press reveals it, and they treat the Holy See as unquestionably wise. The message parallels that of union newspapers: Our leaders are right, and nobody would ever hide behind the cause or cheat.

JOE McMAHON

From the editors: Well, yes, but. The first in-depth coverage of clergy pedophilia was authored by Jason Berry and published in *National Catholic Reporter*. What some regard as the most comprehensive and knowledgeable account of the troubles at Covenant House, the work of Mark Redmond and Roseanne Hagerty Redmond, appeared in these very pages [May 18, 1990]. And at least some diocesan papers are no longer mere house organs.

Bias in big tomes

Fort Washington, N.Y.

To the Editors: If encyclopedias are part of the media, I can add a few words to the many in your admirable issue on religion and the media.

In the '60s and '70s I put in some hard time in the encyclopedia game. It took me two days on the job to spot a bias in management against including religion as a topic deserving coverage in their allegedly inclusive range of interests.

The reason most often given was that people just won't read these pieces—they want space exploration, sports, movies, celebrities of any sort. I agreed that it was much easier to get a useful piece on baseball or Elvis Presley than one on Buddhism or Zwingli, but that we had to try.

Another source of bias was the conviction that, except for old Italian and Irish Catholics and "redneck" Protestants, "nobody believes that stuff any more." I rejected the "nobody." I know belief is no longer as close to universal as it once was, but it still has its hundreds of millions; and it's interesting.

I'm ordering extra copies of your issue to send to friends still active in the Episcopal Diocese of Long Island. My thanks to Peter Steinfels, who must have labored for weeks on those measured and highly readable statements, and to the other contributors to a discussion that was way above average for this sort of forum.

LORING W. BATTEN

Why integration failed

Stuttgart, Germany

To the Editors: It is clear from David R. Carlin, Jr.'s "A Dream Deferred" [January 27] that he values Martin Luther King, Jr.'s vision of the "Beloved Community," where people "will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character." But I am troubled by his charge that black leaders and their white liberal friends are to blame for the failure of racial integration because of their support for affirmative-action programs that attempt to give African-Americans a chance at decent education, jobs, and political representation.

This is a classic example of unfairly blaming the victims. Black leaders are not responsible for the development of race consciousness. White leaders are. What so many whites seem unable to remember, and no black can forget, is that government-supported racism designed to keep blacks "in their place" is part of the very warp and woof of our history, beginning with the writing of our Constitution, continuing to our own time. In my lifetime blacks have had to sit in the back of the bus and the back of the church, have been beaten, jailed, and lynched for trying to vote, have been (and still are) pushed into ghettoes and then blamed for being there—all this not because of the content of their character but because of the color of their skin.

What Carlin calls "benign race consciousness" (and blames for the persistence of racism) was/is an effort, however feeble, to make some restitution for centuries of oppression that have wreaked havoc on black lives. It is white America's refusal to accept responsibility for official and societal racism that has blocked realization of Martin Luther King's dream.

MICHAEL P. CHEW

Surprised by joy

Hartford, Conn.

To the Editors: I must admit I usually consider the poetry in your publication "filler." It has not struck a chord, moved my heart, nor illumined my mind. No doubt this is

(Continued on page 28)

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COMMONWEAL

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Tough love?

Welfare isn't working. On that, everyone agrees, from the "Devil-take-the-hindmost" crowd to those who live under the system to those who have fought to make it succeed (*see*, Patrick T. Murphy's testimony, page 12). But after that, the consensus vanishes. Should welfare be reformed, or should a stake be driven through its heart?

The welfare system is a combination of 336 federal and state programs dealing with everything from health and housing to jobs to birth and death. Initiated to assist the poor temporarily, both the programs and the poor are very much with us. In fact, the number of poor Americans has reached an all-time high (37 million), and in the past four years, the number of people on AFDC—Aid to Families with Dependent Children, the federal government's standard cash grant program for poor families—has jumped by 2.7 million. Today it is over 14 million, of whom nearly 10 million are children.

If the numbers are daunting, so are the moral, political, and economic questions associated with welfare: Does welfare create dependency? Has it promoted or supported the nation's rising rate of illegitimacy? Should government attempt to provide what families and intermediate groups used to do, and do better? And can a nation with a $4 trillion debt afford to keep putting money into failed programs?

But if the welfare reform debate is to achieve anything, two givens must be established: First, the poor are fellow human beings; government aid may have limits, but we cannot turn our backs on those in need. Second, successful reform will depend on a modicum of consensus among all the players—providers and taxpayers, politicians and recipients.

● The well-being of the nation depends on establishing conditions conducive to the success of all its members. The growing number of poor people and the growing disparity between haves and have-nots have led to the impoverishment of the culture. If America is to prosper, more of our citizens must lead productive lives.

● The flaws and abuses of the welfare system have contributed to a deterioration of the nation's "human capital." Still, to overhaul the system is not the same thing as gutting it. Without an adequate safety net, too many of us in a competitive, technologically driven society will fall on our faces. To date, the solutions offered by the 104th Congress have been to cut: soon, often, and deep. So far, 63 percent of the proposed discretionary cuts will fall on "human services." The safety net is shrinking to a hanky. Take AFDC. Under the Republican contract, it would be replaced by block grants to individual states. Federal funding would be frozen at this year's level for five years, and state matching funds would no longer be required, slashing the program further. Unified, national standards would be done away with. And when the money ran out, the only entitlement left would be the street. Of course, a wide variety of state-based alternatives would spring up under the proposed scenario. But

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states shirked their responsibilities in the past; that's what led to national programs in the first place.

Or take housing. A proposed $7.3 billion cut in HUD funds could lead to 32,000 more homeless families by July. An additional 27,000 elderly and disabled may lose rent subsidies, and thousands more their heating assistance. Cutting people's housing or heating allowances may appeal to the numbers crunchers, but these cuts will force the vulnerable on to the streets or into public shelters—both costly to government and dangerous to the people who must use them.

Similarly, the food stamp program. Until recently it was touted by the Republican leadership as "the ultimate safety net." Now it is likely to be torn apart. States would be able to opt out of the national program, spending would be capped and cut, and the able-bodied person who had not found a job in ninety days would be cut off.

The aim of welfare reform ought to be building, not simply cutting: creating programs that will prepare welfare recipients for productive work. Obviously, this is a long-term commitment, involving significant outlays. But employment has always been and will remain the Achilles' heel of welfare reform. And lacking jobs, the need for welfare will not go away. (Candidate Bill Clinton's call for a national partnership between business and government to foster jobs remains a critical, unaddressed issue.) People need *work* because it gives them income, dignity, and a sense of purpose. Society needs *workers* because there is much to be done in a humane and well-ordered polity. This could be a win-win situation. But when private enterprise cannot satisfy these basic requirements, the public sector must step in.

Both the U.S. Catholic Conference and Catholic Charities have testified before Congress supporting welfare reform, but both have raised the hardest question: Under the reforms, what happens to the children of the unemployed and the unemployable? The bishops took a stand: "We cannot support programs that would deny aid to parents for whom there are no jobs." This is the bottom line. They suggest the following: Strengthen the earned-income tax credit; end two-parent family penalties; promote stricter child-support enforcement; require young, unmarried mothers to live with their parents or in structured programs.

Effective welfare reform will require more than cuts. The case of Michigan tells a cautionary tale. The state's Republican governor, John Engler, has gained national prominence for his success in downsizing the state's welfare system. But according to David Whitman (*New Republic*, February 6), Engler's welfare-to-work success has been very modest indeed, reducing the state's welfare rolls by only 1 percentage point. Another of the governor's touted programs, increasing the proportion of adults on welfare who work, has shown an improvement of only 1.7 percentage points. Furthermore, of 82,000 people cut from home relief by the Engler administration, only 20 percent have been able to find and hold a steady job after two years' time. The rest have had to depend on federal and local programs that were there to pick up the slack. But perhaps no longer.

The keys to successful welfare reform are hard work and jobs, but also a recognition that a certain percentage of people will always be in need, requiring government to help provide basic amenities. Some deny that reality in the name of "tough love." Tough it is, but love it's not.

School lunches torpedoed

Nervous seventh graders from Toledo's Glenbyrne Jr. High marched into the glare of the TV lights and saluted a ten-foot model of the *U.S.S. Toledo*. The students had built the model and were waiting excitedly for the real thing—a $750 million submarine with nuclear-weapons capability—to be commissioned the next day. The TV announcer shared the students' excitement.

In the next report on the evening news, a House committee had just voted to curtail the federal entitlement for school lunches, dismantling a program started in 1946 to address a national disgrace: children so poorly nourished that they had failed their army physicals in World War II. Last year, 345,000 Ohio students ate at least one decent meal a day because of the lunch entitlement—at a fraction of the cost of the *U.S.S. Toledo*.

When Newt Gingrich and his allies wield the budget ax, they loudly proclaim that we must think of the poor: welfare forces them into dependence; it increases the deficit their children will have to pay back. But ask them to eliminate subsidies handed out to corporations and military contractors, and they fall silent. We need to ask whether the government undermines the work ethic of CEOs who run industries on publicly financed electricity? Or whether arms manufacturers are "entitled" to billions?

The welfare reform debate is not about welfare or reform. It's about who has the political power to hold on to their entitlements. Poor kids are the most vulnerable among us. Who will protect them? MIKE FERNER

Mike Ferner was formerly on the Toledo City Council.

REPORT ON GERMANY

GOING BANANAS

A STORY OF FORBIDDEN FRUIT

Who would have ever thought the biggest trade issue in last year's European Community (EC) negotiations in Brussels would be regulations about bananas? Bananas? After months of wrangling, the EC ruled in the fall of 1994 that, beginning in January 1995, all imported bananas must be "free of abnormal curvature" and

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at least 14 cm (5 1/2 inches) in length and 27 mm (1.1 inches) in diameter—unless they come from several former European island colonies. This was at the same time as the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg rejected the bid of Germany, Europe's biggest consumer of bananas, to overturn the EC regulation that gives preference to bananas grown in EC member countries (especially Spain and Greece) and former EC colonies. Germany, you see, imports most of its bananas from non-EC countries, especially Latin America.

The decision was a strong blow to Chancellor Helmut Kohl during last October's German election campaign, from which his party, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), emerged with a scant ten-seat majority. Kohl had vowed that he would get the EC banana-import regulations liberalized.

The German outcry against both decisions was loud. Germany's EC spokesman warned that the ruling would "open the floodgates to protectionism." The German press gave vent to the popular outrage. In Munich, the respected *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* editorialized: "In Germany, a storm of indignation is brewing against the Brussels Commission." In Ulm, the *Suedwest Presse* summed up the reaction of the German *Volk*: "Germany is always being condemned....How often other EC states manage to blind the Luxembourg Court with their national interests....[But] we Germans will have to get used to the idea that we don't have any special status in united Europe."

What's going on here? What are we to make of the so-called EC "banana split"? Why are the Germans getting bent out of shape over banana symmetries, sizes, and quotas? We Americans take bananas for granted; we even trivialize them—we speak of playing second banana, being driven bananas, banana republics, and on and on. But bananas are no joking matter to Germans. In Germany, bananas are an impossibly overdetermined symbol, signifying justice, national self-determination, cultural pride, deprivation, prosperity, Communist tyranny, capitalist luxury, unity, and economic and even sexual freedom. Let me explain.

It turns out that banana politics bears deeply on the issue of German identity, reflecting Teutonic tensions both within and outside reunited Germany. For the early postwar generation, many of whom as children knew of bananas only through the reminiscences of their elders, the fruit still evokes memories of humiliation, deprivation, and even famine. Ever since hunger overtook war-torn, occupied Germany in the mid-1940s, when even basic foodstuffs were unobtainable, bananas have symbolized luxury to both West and East Germans. This began to change in West Germany with the *Wirtschaftwunder* [economic miracle] of the late 1950s and '60s. Parents delightedly weaned their infants on "Banana Salad" baby food, the Gerbers of West Germany. Older West Germans still recall with pride the dramatic speech of Chancellor Konrad Adenauer in July 1957, when he brandished a banana at the Bundestag podium and hailed the fruit as "paradisiacal manna." Adenauer had just returned in triumph from a four-day filibuster in Rome, having finally gotten "Protocol Number 10"—which guaranteed West Germans tariff-free bananas in unlimited quantities—written into the founding Treaty of the European Economic Community (EEC), predecessor of the present-day EC.

The story in East Germany was very different, and consequently the timing of last fall's European Court ruling came at a particularly cruel moment. After the war, bananas were simply absent from East German life—except as a special treat, courtesy of Castro's Cuba, at Christmas time (a holiday never officially recognized in the atheistic GDR). Bananas were regarded as a Western delicacy; their absence came to symbolize communism's failure to provide simple pleasures taken for granted in the West. Even through the 1980s, bananas were virtually unavailable to ordinary GDR citizens. Indeed, before the Wall fell, visiting West Germans often brought a feast of bright, ripe bananas to their East German relatives as a house gift.

When the Berlin Wall crumbled in November 1989, the banana became for Easterners an unofficial symbol of German unity and liberty. By 1992, East Germans were consuming nearly twice as many bananas per year as West Germans. Jubilant East Germans sported bumper stickers featuring two bananas forming the letter "D" for Deutschland. It all seemed a sign of better days to come.

Indeed the Eastern lust for bananas soon symbolized more than just economic liberty. How deep had the banana slipped into the German psyche? Well, *Der Stern* reported that, according to a survey of East German sex shop sales in 1990, a banana shaped vibrator and a banana-flavored condom known as the "Wild Banana" led all other brands. But the banana passion soon turned ugly and began to divide, not unite, Germans. West Germans soon began referring to their naive countrymen in the Wild East as "*Bananen*." East Germans, in turn, resented West German "banana politics." After the March 1990 elections in East Germany, the last Communist ambassador to the U.S. angrily attacked Chancellor Kohl for interfering in the East German elections. The CDU had attracted crowds in the East by handing out free bananas; castigating Western consumerism, the ambassador attributed the CDU victory to "two months of banana policy."

Since 1989, Chancellor Kohl has turned bananas into a test case for European unity and for his conservative, free-market doctrines. During 1990-93, the single major policy issue concerning tariffs in the EC involved reunified Germany's obsession with bananas. Germans, who consume twice as many bananas as do citizens of any other EC nation (and more than 45 percent of total EC consumption), insisted on continuance of the special, duty-free treatment for German banana imports established in the 1958 Treaty of Rome protocol and contrary to the general guidelines of the 1990 Treaty of Rome.

And so, when the EC voted in February 1993 to impose quotas and a high tariff on non-EC-grown bananas, indignant Germans protested. Stickers in shop windows and car windshields urged, in Gothic script, that patriotic Germans "*Esst deutsche Bananen!*" [Eat German bananas!"]. As a disgruntled German EC representative groused: "Why should Germans en-

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thuse about the EC, when we see what the Community is doing to our bananas?"

The EC "banana split," as journalists quickly tagged the controversy, exposed the sharp political tensions underlying the move toward a single, borderless European market. Protesting everything from the EC ban on bent bananas to the neomercantilism of France and Spain, German trade officials pressed their case. They publicly attacked France and Spain, whose banana-growing former island colonies have been the chief beneficiaries of the newest rulings. The new EC import regulations aim to help banana growers in European tropical islands (e.g., France's Martinique and Guadeloupe, Spain's Canary Islands) and in former European colonies. But Germany, which lost all its colonies after World War I, complains that Germans prefer larger, bright yellow, Latin American "Dollar Bananas"—so named because of their size and rich color—to the more expensive, smaller, paler "Eurobananas" from EC overseas territories and former colonies.

German officials also warned that the new tariff would not only send banana prices skyrocketing and reduce German banana imports, but destroy the economies of several Latin American banana-exporting nations.

And some of the dire predictions have borne fruit: The new tariff boosted banana prices 63 percent in 1994 and cut demand by more than 25 percent, resulting in a loss of several thousand jobs in fruit-importing businesses. Moreover, with German banana imports from Latin America down 50 percent in the latter half of 1993, 170,000 jobs in Latin America vanished.

For Germans, the banana has become the symbol of the EC's hypocritical refusal to act on its free-trade rhetoric. For much of the rest of Europe, the banana shootout with Germany represents a necessary attempt to prevent reunified Germany from throwing its weight around and gaining a "special status" based on its economic superiority. But whatever the odds, Bonn has vowed to continue the fight against Eurobananas and for Dollar Bananas.

In short, the banana split is likely to deepen.

JOHN RODDEN

John Rodden teaches in the communications department at the University of Texas at Austin.

OF SEVERAL MINDS Sidney Callahan

FILLING IN THE GAPS

THE VISIBLE MEETS THE INVISIBLE

Where oh where is the missing 90 percent of the cosmos? Frantic scientists search in vain for the invisible "dark matter" of the universe. Theoretically, the missing matter ought to exist somewhere, but how? The most recent excitement comes from new findings that suggest the universe's omnipresent but invisible neutrinos may possess mass after all; this helps resolve a bit more of the puzzle.

As an ardent advocate of science, I follow these cosmological debates and indulge in speculation over how the visible relates to the invisible universe. I also notice that I have no trouble giving instant assent to accounts of all sorts of unseen mysterious events like quantum-mechanical particle transformations. After all, science has always progressed by discovering that beneath the world of appearances an unseen order operates.

As a psychologist, I've joined the hunt for the most elusive and engaging quarry of all: How does consciousness operate? How does the physical brain produce the invisible mind? On reflection, I see that the drive to understand what isn't immediately apparent to the senses has been a lifelong preoccupation.

I can remember lying in bed as a child trying (rather fruitlessly) to visualize the end of space. Indeed the whole natural and social world seemed alive with hidden meanings, if only I could grasp them. You mean like sex? Assuredly, but death preoccupied me even more.

In the middle of World War II, people we loved were being blown up, and megadeath was a constant. What happened to the dying when they disappeared from our ken?

To feed my insatiable desire to know everything, and to indulge in gluttonous pleasure, I read day and night. (By flashlight when necessary.) For long hours of many days I successfully avoided the command to go out and play. Well, from time to time I enjoyed manic bouts of neighborhood kick-the-can or hide-and-seek orgies, but generally I'd rather have been reading.

Obviously I was becoming the kind of adolescent ripe for conversion to the Christian mysteries. All the more so because of opposition by my parents who felt religion to be an unhealthy superstition best avoided. (Intellectuals were also suspect, and religious intellectuals were worst of all.) Thank God at just the right moment, I stumbled upon a spirit-filled Protestant church that could confirm and spur on my intellectual and spiritual quest.

Forty-five years later, still reading, I was snapped to attention the other day by a theologian's stark assertion, "If God is invisible, then the invisible is, indeed, of vastly more importance than the visible." Aha. Is then the invisible part of creation even more wonderful and important than the one that we can see? And do divine spiritual realities exist beyond the invisible dimensions of the universe?

Reflecting upon the Incarnation, it would make sense to envision one holistic interpenetrable reality. On the track of the unseen, I scurried back to Newman's sermon on "The Invisible World."

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Like Plotinus and Augustine before him, Newman sees "another world all around us, though we see it not, and more wonderful than the world we see...." For Newman, these hidden spiritual realities are "present, not future, not distant." On that great day when the kingdom will come, the veil will be removed. Then we will be able to see the living Christ along with all the millions upon millions of individuals who have died and gone before us.

Do we have problems, Newman asks, believing in the invisible world? Then imagine that the hidden kingdom of God can be manifested just as nature shows forth its hidden powers in the spring. Blossoms and fruit burst into being from seemingly barren ground. Moreover, we can look to the many invisible worlds we already encounter—in physical nature, in the many different circles of human society which function unknown to each other, and in animal life.

Animals? I had forgotten Newman's interest in what we would now label as an ecological approach. But then, when I last read this essay, I had never heard of the word "ecology," so naturally I wouldn't recognize, resonate with, or remember Newman's paean to the mystery of animal life. The animals, he maintains, give us a message about the universe because they exist in "such countless multitudes, so various in their natures, so strange and wild in their shapes."

Although we cannot understand creatures who are strangers to us, we can acknowledge and wonder about their hidden life. Or, as a modern philosopher asks in a famous essay, "What is it like to be a bat?"

I also must have been motivated to forget this nice bit of Newman's argument because he goes on to use the mysterious world of animals below us to argue for the existence of angels above us. The great chain of being and all that. These other unseen "inhabitants of the world invisible" are powerful, "blessed spirits" who "are actively employed among us in the church." Indeed, "no Christian is so humble but he has angels to attend on him, if he lives by faith and love."

Angels? Oh dear. Here my intellectual skepticism emerges in full force. I'm absolutely allergic to talk about angels. Where do they stand in the hierarchy of truths to be believed anyway?

"Come on—I know you're in there somewhere!"

Yes, I can recognize the thrust of Newman's arguments and his reminders of the many many references to angels in Scripture. I also see how ironic it is for me to believe in invisible neutrinos streaming through all the matter in the universe and yet balk at angels. But my resistance to angels and larger invisible spiritual conflicts is tied to my inability to accept Satan, evil spirits, demonic possession, and exorcism. (Chalk up another victory for Screwtape!)

I'm still disturbed by arguments last year with some fundamentalist Christian psychologists who believe in the demonic approach to certain manifestations of abnormal behavior (as does Scott Peck, for instance). They tied their belief in invisible evil spirits serving Satan to their belief in invisible angelic spirits serving God. And you better believe it, they too could quote Scripture to support their case.

O.K., so I've got to work out this demon thing with a lot more learning and research in theology and psychology. I will return. It's enough at the moment to accept the importance of the invisible world. I'm willing to affirm with Emily D.: "This world is not conclusion/A species stands beyond/Invisible as music/But positive as sound." □

OF SEVERAL MINDS John Garvey

WHEN A CHILD DIES

OF COURSE THERE IS NO ANSWER

The church I serve is a small one, and in some ways the commonly heard idea that the church should be like a family is a reality here, for better or worse. Just as in a family at its best, people frequently bear one another's burdens and accept people in their complexities; and just as in families at their worst, there are sometimes long-standing arguments, old grudges, and generalizations ("He was always like that...") that freeze people into their places. For the most part, it is a warm, closely-knit communi-

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ty, and people work together well.

When a tragedy hits at this level, it shows how deep the reality of the church-as-family can be. A few weeks ago a little girl, two years and four months old, died suddenly. She choked on a grape as she played with her brothers, and when her mother saw her falling it was too late. The grief of Anna's parents is bottomless. The rest of us remembered her from the previous Sunday, running around, singing—she was a lively, delightful girl—and everyone has been mourning. Parents wonder how they can explain this to children who think often of Anna; everyone asks "why?" And of course there is no answer.

It is the great sin of some religious people to think that there is a satisfactory answer to a tragedy of this sort, and to tell the afflicted parents such dreadful things as, "At least you have the other two," or "God must have needed her," or "She's in heaven now," or "It must have been her time." Some people are more patient than I am with the intentions of these people; they only want to console, they mean well. I know that. But their words can go in like knives, and it seems to me that there is a kind of sentimental rudeness here, at least, and a terrible insensitivity.

I was fifteen when my sister Grace died suddenly. She was eighteen months old and had just begun to walk, and one of our favorite photographs was of this little girl crossing a room carrying a copy of a book called *Understanding Language*. Her death was devastating. When people said stupid and banal things to my parents, or to me, I was furious. The morning after her death I thought the sun shouldn't shine, water shouldn't flow, the world shouldn't work in the pleasant, indifferent way it usually does.

Nothing can console you after a loss like this, and there were no answers to the question, "How can a child die before her parents? What can make this all right, what can square this with the belief that God is good?" What answer could make you say, "Oh, then—*that* makes it all right!" We hope for resurrection, for reunion with those we love, but the reality now is that we are not with them, and their loss is close to unbearable. The death of a child is a sign that the world, as it is, is not all right, that because of sin, death reigns here, and it is not supposed to be that way. The only way to avoid the pain of living in a world like this is to refuse to love at all.

The morning of Anna's funeral I spent some time with the Book of Job. I realize that there are some scholars who see the end of the Book of Job as a tacked-on thing, an attempt to wrap everything up, and I have to admit that I agree with the reaction of a Jewish friend who said of the fact that Job had a second fortune and new children, "Big deal!" That really doesn't work—you'd reject it in fiction, and it sure doesn't work in life. But what is most important here is God's rebuke to Job's comforters, the people who tell him that his afflictions came about because of his sinfulness, or because the happiness of the just is always short-lived, or because God was testing his faith. But God says, "I burn with anger against you and your two friends, for not having spoken correctly about me as my servant Job has done." God commands Job to pray for his friends, while they are commanded to sacrifice in atonement for what amounts to dishonesty with God.

But what was Job's "correct speaking"? Although God's answer to Job is in some sense not an answer—God says, in effect, "I know what I am doing and you do not and cannot"—it is a response to Job's anguished, "Why?" It is essential for us to ask this question; we would be inhuman if we did not. And it will not be answered. Job, confronted with God, says, "Before, I knew you only by hearsay/but now, having seen you with my own eyes,/I retract what I have said,/and repent in dust and ashes." It is essential for us to ask why the innocent suffer, and essential for us to understand that we will not understand. This is what makes Job justified before God, and it is false consolation and simplification that makes God "burn with anger" against Job's friends.

A tragedy of this depth forces us to confront the mystery of the cross, which exists because the world is not at all what it is meant to be. In this world there can be no satisfactory answer to the question, "Why do the innocent suffer?" Any satisfactory answer would literally be obscene, whose root meaning is, "in the wrong place." Here we do not have the possibility of answering the question. As Christians we know there is one who suffers with us, we have the hope of resurrection, and we have nothing else. □

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THE EPIDEMIC OF FORGIVENESS

IT'S NOT AS HONEST AS IT LOOKS

GORDON D. MARINO

Last year Earl Justus was executed in Virginia for the rape and murder of a young woman who was nine-months pregnant. He was also convicted of homicide on two other counts. In a radio interview on the eve of his execution, Justus reported that over the years he had repeatedly petitioned the families of his victims for forgiveness. Without commenting on their response, he went on to say that, in time, he had learned to forgive himself for what he had done. I am not an advocate of the gallows, so do not misunderstand my cross-examining the next-to-last words of a condemned man—but: Whence comes this notion that we can forgive ourselves our own trespasses?

Perhaps there was nothing extraordinary about Justus's belief that he could forgive himself. I hear people absolving themselves all the time. Just last week a friend confided to me that he had finally forgiven himself for the hell he had put his first wife through. Shortly thereafter, I tuned in on a talk show to hear an alcoholic father sigh that he had forgiven himself for the damage he had inflicted upon his children.

People are not only forgiving themselves, they are encouraging others to do the same. Take a good friend of mine, whose not-so-nurturing father is dying from a rare and aggressive form of cancer. After a recent, and probably final, visit my friend reported that he told his father to forgive himself. "Why that particular message?" I gently pressed. Not entirely without grounds, my friend explained that he thought his father's extreme guilt had thwarted his ability to value the good things in his life and that the end might be less spiritually devastating if his father could only believe that his life was not the abject moral failure he took it to be. This is forgiveness as a form of therapy. Guilt is the disease. Absolution the cure.

Katherine Power, the sixties' revolutionary who turned herself in after twenty-three years on the lam for participating in a bank robbery in which a police officer and father of six was killed, said during her trial: "I spent many years in therapy, learning to understand, to tolerate, and forgive both others and myself." While I won't meddle in the conscience of Katherine Power, it does seem fair to ask: Can we forgive ourselves our own trespasses? Or, is forgiving oneself an empty gesture, rather like blessing oneself or apologizing to oneself?

As Jeffrie Murphy and Jean Hampton argue in their book, *Forgiveness and Mercy* (Cambridge University Press, 1988), the concept of forgiveness is traditionally bound up with the idea of a restored relationship. Thus, when a friend recently forgave me for being so absorbed in a project that I neglected to notice that he had been twisting on one of life's racks, he was saying that he was willing to resume our relationship. There is, it is true, more to forgiveness than a renewed relationship. There are many cases of people continuing relationships for no other reason than their psychological inability to break them off. Just the same, were my friend to announce that he had forgiven me but didn't want anything more to do with me, I would

"My conscience keeps bothering me.... Can you give me something to quiet it?"

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have good cause for believing that he really hadn't forgiven me at all. Not to play the philosophical pedant, but it could be argued that the restoration of relations is a necessary but not sufficient condition for forgiveness. Thus, who am I, the transgressor, to unilaterally decide that the person against whom I have transgressed shall no longer allow my transgression to stand as a barrier to our relationship? It would be ludicrous for me to tell my friend, "I know that I wasn't there when you needed me, but I am sorry and have forgiven myself and so I shall no longer allow my act of numbness to come between us."

Another notion of forgiveness, articulated by Bishop Butler, is that forgiveness is the letting go of one's justified feelings of resentment. To be sure, there are circumstances in which letting go of a sense of resentment betrays a lack of self-respect, or at least a sense that here is a person with whom I cannot afford to be angry; so, there is more to forgiveness than releasing resentment. Nevertheless, were my friend to claim that he forgave me but still resented my insensitivity, I would have good reason to conclude that he really hadn't forgiven me. But to the extent that forgiveness can be described as the release of resentment under appropriate circumstances, how could I possibility forgive myself for hurting someone else? I have no grounds, psychological or otherwise, for feeling resentment. It is clear that I cannot forgive myself for hurting my friend, if by that I mean that at the time of my self-absolution I forswear all feelings of resentment toward the person whom I have left in the lurch. It would also be completely benighted of me to think that I could forgive myself in the sense that I could command someone whom I have hurt to smother the justified resentment which was the outcome of the injury I inflicted.

Dryden observed that forgiveness belongs to the injured. It is up to the person who has been sinned against to say that he will cover over or wash away the harm that he has suffered. Except in cases of an individual being closely identified with the victim, and then only in an attenuated sense, third-party forgiveness is no forgiveness at all. It would be ridiculous for me to forgive your mugger or for you to forgive me for letting down my friend. Thus, it would be ridiculous for me to forgive Pol Pot for his killing fields.

The genius of this and related territory, Dostoevsky, raised the problem of divine forgiveness as a form of third-party forgiveness. God, he argued in the character of Ivan Karamazov, cannot forgive the demon who tortures a child because it wasn't God, but the child, who was tortured. In the Christian tradition we have coped with this theological problem in a number of different ways. One of them has been to argue that every sin is ultimately a sin against God; another has been that because we are God's creation, God is no more a third party to our sins against one another than parents are a third party to the harms that their children suffer. The mystery of divine forgiveness aside, the reason a bystander cannot reasonably forgive a mugging is because it wasn't the bystander who got his nose broken and wallet stolen. Neither did the thug get his nose broken and wallet stolen. The mugger has no more authority to forgive himself than the bystander has to forgive the mugger.

Forgiving oneself is like third-party forgiveness except for one feature, the person who forgives himself usually does so on the basis that, unlike the bystander, he has experienced pain—the pain of guilt. And now, after a time, which is for some long and others short, the self-absolver concludes that the amount of guilt that he has suffered is sufficient to pay for the suffering that he has caused. But, once again, who am I to decide that the pangs of conscience that I have suffered are sufficient penance for, say, having left my friend out on a limb? Indeed, if I could really assume the roles of both judge and defendant and so set my own penalties, there would not be any need to plead for forgiveness. I could decide the whole matter myself without ever coming under the examination of another; I could sentence myself to so much guilt, serve my sentence of knit brows, and then go on my morally self-assured way.

The idea that we can forgive ourselves our own trespasses violates all traditional conceptions of forgiveness. Forgiveness is a relational act and as such cannot be carried out alone. Here it might be instructive to imagine, and for some it will not take much imagination, someone having put a wrecking ball through your life. As the years roll on, you try to forgive the rabid individual who left you with a cicatrix running from your spine to your soul. However, every time you conjure up this person's face, nothing but fear and hate comes to you. Try as you have, you cannot forgive him. And then one day you hear that this very person has learned to do what you couldn't do, namely, forgive himself. What would you feel? Maybe I am hard of heart, but I would feel as though my tormentor were simply kidding himself. I would feel as though he was compounding one transgression with another. Not surprisingly, the notion that we can forgive ourselves seems more viable to the person who has slung the stone, and now has the furies breathing down his neck, than it does to the person who is trying to peel his life off the floor.

Within contemporary Western thought there is a strong suspicion about the moral effects of guilt. In the view of some psychologists, a little bit of guilt is healthy but a little more than that is useless self-flagellation—and even counterproductive. Indeed, even such unmeliorist figures as Sören Kierkegaard have observed that guilt of a certain pitch and with a certain edge often spurs the despairing attempt to blow the brains out of guilt by sinking oneself deeper and deeper in sin. In a different venue, Freud recognized the same phenomenon and believed that a capacity to tolerate guilt without acting it out in scenarios of self-destruction was a necessary attribute of candidates for psychoanalytic therapy. While I can't presume to speak for all self-forgivers, my own moral-psychological struggles instruct me that the intuition behind gestures of self-absolution often fall along the lines of, "it won't do any good to continue torturing myself about, say, having unintentionally but nevertheless irresponsibly hurt a student, and so regardless of what the student says, I forgive myself."

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But it is one thing for me to resolve to accept what I have done and stop torturing myself, and another for me to imagine that I can wipe my slate clean. Likewise, though I have twice heard the heretical invocation to self-forgiveness come from the pulpit, it is one thing for me to pray for and have trust in God's forgiveness and quite another for me to imagine that I can forgive myself. On this point, I have the strong sense that the idea of self-forgiveness is a symptom of the secularization process. People for whom the idea of a personal God has become an offense often wish to retain some of the ethico-religious ideas associated with faith, such as forgiveness. So, fantastically enough, they take this power upon themselves.

As I have previously written, many of us are always singing songs about taking responsibility for our lives and deeds (*Commonweal*, February 12, 1993). It is not always clear to me what these tales come to, but one thing is certain, taking responsibility for myself must involve acknowledging both intellectually and affectively the injuries that I have visited upon others. This civilizing yet humble posture of acknowledgment is no picnic and there are many ways of twisting free of the need to assume it. Not the least of these is the fantasy that we can forgive ourselves.

In his *Religion within the Limits of Reason*, Kant argued that were it not for faith in the mystical possibility of forgiveness, the serious individual would take one look into the looking glass of his past actions, glean the corrupt soul that gave rise to them, and fall into terminal moral despair. The need for forgiveness may seem selfish to those with utilitarian moral instincts, but it is nothing to feel guilty about.

Still, if it is forgiveness that we seek, then we need to seek it from the person or people whom we have hurt. But what of the individual who has done something for which it is virtually impossible to be forgiven? Take for example the young soldier who, filled with rage, torches a village. Should he carry that act to his grave? While I was never placed in the crucible of a battlefield, I am not a personal stranger to this problem. From the sheer vantage point of moral psychology, it would be far better for me to live as a penitent remembering that I am not a distant cousin to the individual who committed some heinous deed, than for me to pretend that I could, of my own accord, unhitch myself from my past. Although I do not have the notation to capture even idealized movements of the spirit, I can see that while they may appear the same, the humble acknowledgment of my sins is one movement, moral masochism another. Again, I am not suggesting that we should burn ourselves at the stake for our transgressions; such acts of moral self-immolation can easily become and lead to further causes for guilt. I am, however, insisting that not everything is permitted by the understandable desire to get on with our lives. □

COLLEGE OF NEW ROCHELLE

Director of Campus Ministry

The College of New Rochelle, an independent College which is Catholic in origin and heritage, seeks applications for the position of Director of Campus Ministry. Located in lower Westchester County, the College is 35 minutes from midtown Manhattan. Founded in 1904, as a liberal arts college for women, the College has become a medium-sized, multi-campus institution, serving diverse student populations through its four schools.

The Office of Campus Ministry is part of the Student Services Division and the Director reports to the Vice-President for Student Services.

The Director is responsible for the overall planning and implementation of the Campus Ministry Programs and Services. The Campus Ministry Program includes: spiritual growth and faith development, service learning experiences, intellectual exploration of religious traditions, and practices of peace and justice.

The successful candidate will possess at least a Masters Degree in Theology, Pastoral Ministry, or related field, and give evidence of leadership, administrative skills, and the ability to build community among different religious traditions.

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PRESERVING CHAOS

THE RIGHT IGNORES THE UNDERCLASS, THE LEFT PATRONIZES IT

PATRICK T. MURPHY

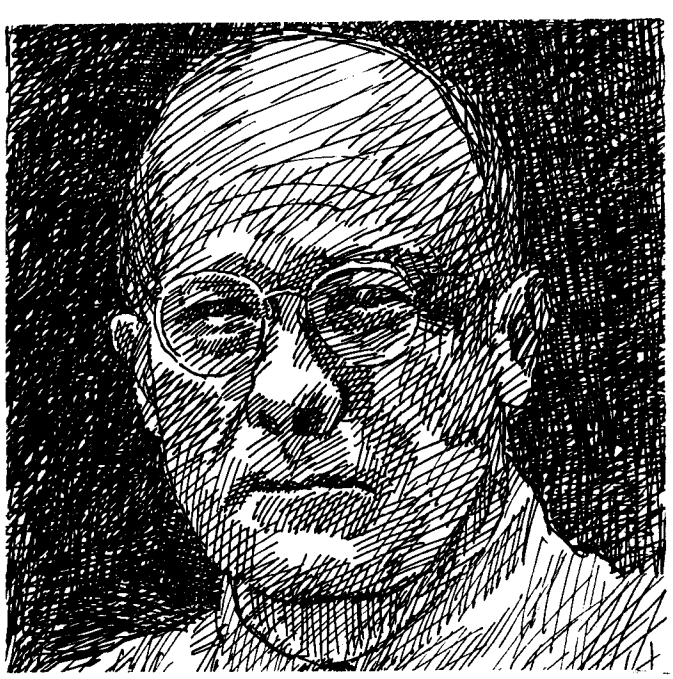
On September 15, 1994, the Chicago police charged a thirty-one-year-old woman living on the West Side with endangering her nine children, aged six-weeks to adolescence. The police reported: "Each child smelled of human feces, there was inadequate cleanliness, inadequate food, roach-infested conditions, and two inches of water in the house." The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) had been "working with" the mother for the past half-dozen years. After the police took the kids from the woman, a DCFS spokesperson said: "From the time we've been involved with the family, we've been dealing with issues related to poverty....We can't take children away just because of poverty."

Four years earlier, DCFS, with juvenile court approval, had taken the kids from the mother because she left home to get her welfare check and didn't come back for two days. Her six children were left with an invalid grandmother. According to investigators at that time, the four children, "were without coats. Poor hygiene...standing water...soiled pampers throughout bedroom floor. Holes in walls and falling plaster....Older children admitted they had not had any breakfast for two days, only lunch at school and a sandwich for dinner. Infant was saturated with urine when child was taken into custody. Worker changed Pamper and baby was so raw from diaper rash, skin literally came off in diaper. There was no food at all in the refrigerator, all baby formula was spoiled, even the bottle the child was drinking from...."

After a few months, DCFS returned the kids to the custody of the mother and began to offer her benefits of a program called Family Preservation Services, including a housekeeper five days a week. They purchased beds and hired workmen to install a hot-water heater and fix the holes in the wall. Somewhere along the line, however, they forgot to make sure that the mother kicked her drug habit. Not surprisingly, four years later, the kids were in worse shape and there were three more of them.

I have been representing abused and neglected children since 1968, first as a legal services lawyer, then in private practice, and since 1986 as Public Guardian of Cook County. In 1974, I wrote a book, *Our Kindly Parent the State* (Viking Press, Penguin Books), about my experiences in representing abused and neglected children and their families. In that book, and later, on at least two occasions before congressional committees, I argued that the poor were being victimized by the state's approach to child welfare. Along with others, I argued that family preservation would be cheaper for the government and better for the child. In the 1970s, cases of actual child abuse were rare in my experience. Back then, we argued that most children were taken from poor parents because of the middle-class bias of state social workers.

In 1980, Congress passed the Adoption Assistance and Child Welfare Act, which mandated that the state provide Family Preservation Services to keep children at home. In Illinois, these services include housekeepers in the home, cash vouchers up to $500, down payments for two months' rent, psychiatric or other counseling, and chauffeuring services. The Adoption Assistance Act was the culmination of the do-not-blame-the-victim philosophy of the late sixties and seventies, in this case expressed by the view that a poor, powerless, and misguided parent is as much a victim as the child whom he or she has neglected or abused. The purpose of the legislation was to pro-



PATRICK T. MURPHY *is the Public Guardian of Cook County. This article is excerpted from testimony he gave on January 23, 1995, before the House Committee on Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Oversight.*

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vide state services so that parents could learn to care for their own children.

The Office of the Public Guardian represents abused and neglected children, primarily at the Juvenile Court of Chicago. We see life from the bottom of the mountain, not the top. We are lawyers trying to represent, as best we can 31,000 children, ranging in age from a few-days-old to swaggering, defiant, frightened adolescents. We cannot tell you first-hand the effects of reviews required by the Adoption Assistance Act, but we can tell you first-hand that these reviews appear to make no difference other than to increase bureaucracy.

We believe that these reviews and the philosophy of family preservation they entail should be done away with because:

- experience shows that they do not help;
- the philosophy these reviews seek to uphold has been shown to be not only muddleheaded, but positively counterproductive, in that it harms the very people it seeks to help;
- anything we can do to reduce federal bureaucracy and to return decision making to those who actually face these problems is a step in the right direction.

I began with an actual case, and I could write pages about the number of kids I have seen beaten, raped, or killed while the state was trying to preserve a family that was not a family at all, but instead, a couple of people whose sexual relations led to the birth of a child. In my view from the bottom of the mountain, at a collectively unconscious level, society simply does not consider the underclass kid to have the same worth as a middle-class child, white or black. These poor children are fungible commodities to be experimented with by sending them back to parents who have tortured or neglected them.

In 1986, 8,000 children were in substitute care in Cook County as a result of abuse and neglect. Today, there are over 30,000 such children. In 1986, 262,000 children throughout the United States were in substitute care, while today there are about half a million. Most child welfare experts attribute this astounding increase to drug abuse by parents. At least 80 percent of the cases we see in Cook County involve a drug-addicted parent or parents. Lawyers in Los Angeles and New York tell me that their statistics are the same or higher. P.T.M.

The child welfare crowd frequently takes a blasé attitude toward child abuse. A recent study divided all injuries suffered by children into four categories: fatal, serious, moderate, and inferred. Moderate was defined as "injuries or impairments for which observable symptoms persisted for at least twenty-four hours (for example, bruises, depression, or emotional distress)." The authors of the report listed only 6 percent of all sexual abuse cases as serious, even though one-third of all sexual abuse cases included penile penetration ("National Incidence and Prevalence of Child Abuse and Neglect," 1988, revised report, Rockville, MD, Westat, September 1991, as reported by Douglas Besharov and Lisa Laumann, "Don't Call It Child Abuse if It's Really Poverty," Woodrow Wilson School, Princeton.)

Therefore, a majority of cases where your friendly pervert screws a child are not serious. And it is only "moderate" sex abuse when the mom's paramour or the dad comes up behind a twelve-year-old girl and fondles her breast, or pats her butt, or bites her on the shoulder, or strokes her leg or crotch as they're watching MTV. And it's only moderate sex abuse when in one-third of the cases the lout actually screws the kid. But the true believers in the child welfare industry argue that these adults are victims who must be helped at the expense of the child's safety.

Imagine the response of feminists (or conservative, traditional women, for that matter) to anyone who argued that such behavior toward a nonconsenting adult woman is not serious? Or try suggesting that a boss mouthing sexual innuendos is not guilty of a serious infraction. Or that a goon who slaps his wife or girlfriend around leaving "injuries or impairments for which observable symptoms persisted for at least twenty-four hours" constitutes only "moderate abuse." Beat up or rape the kid down the block and you'll end up in the can for a good long spell. Beat up or have sex with your own child and you'll get a social worker and a housekeeper.

The federal guidelines mandate that even when the children are taken away, the states must bend over backward to send the children back home. Let me give you one more case, but I'll let the *Chicago Tribune* explain it: "A mother who stood idly by as her boyfriend repeatedly sexually and physically abused her three daughters, including one who later died, should be flown at taxpayer expense to Florida four times a year to visit her two surviving girls, [DCFS officials] are recommending....At the trial, testimony showed that [the mother] for years stood idly by as her three daughters were beaten and raped by [the boyfriend]. In some instances, she had been in the same bed with [the boyfriend] as he sexually attacked her daughter, according to the testimony." The daughters were four, six, and eight at the time that the younger one was murdered by the boyfriend.

The review required for family preservation is a great idea if there is a family to preserve. But it is a horrible idea if it involves keeping children (or returning them) in a situation where they can be seriously harmed. The goal of child welfare should be child protection. At times, child protection means preserving the family. But federally mandated child preservation too often means that services are lavished on irresponsible individuals who have seriously harmed their children.

Family preservation also makes little sense in the larger scheme of welfare services. Under its aegis, irresponsible behavior is rewarded and responsible behavior is denigrated. If, for instance, you take any floor of any housing project in the nation, you may find seven families struggling heroically against impossible odds to raise their children adequately, three or four families providing marginally for their children, and one or two crack-cocaine addicts who abuse their children or leave them alone while they go out looking for drugs. Which of the parents receives additional services

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from the taxpayers? Not the seven families providing heroically for their children or even the families who are providing marginal care. Instead, the drug addict, actively abusing or neglecting her children, may get a housekeeper, money, intensive social work services, chauffeuring to appointments, and even several months' rent for a new apartment, so that she can move out of the projects.

The message to people in the underclass is: Act irresponsibly and you will get help. Act responsibly and you get nothing. I submit to you that this is a patronizing message. Because it involves the underclass, which in our major cities is comprised primarily of African-Americans, it is a racist message.

The underclass was not created by welfare, but today it is sustained by a welfare system that encourages dependency. The problems of the underclass are exacerbated by the flight of companies to underdeveloped countries. To succeed today, you need at least a high school diploma and probably more. Children having children do not finish their high school education. People of the underclass do not have the high school education plus more. The Right ignores the plight of the underclass, and the Left patronizes it, which is just another form of racism.

Society, schools, and the Left expect nothing from inner-city African-American kids, whether bright, average, or dumb. The most depressing part of my job is to walk into juvenile court on any day, and to see kids about the same age as my own two sons, with the same potential for excellence and achievement, who will never have the chance to attain that potential. As a society, we should demand excellence from everybody, but most particularly from those who have no one else to motivate them to reach their potential.

I compare the underclass I currently see in court to the poor I represented in the sixties and seventies, and the comparison is invidious. I now see five or six generations, fifteen years apart, of welfare-dependent families without constant male authority figures; schools that do not—and cannot without parental involvement—educate; a welfare system depriving people of dignity, fostering irresponsible behavior, and belittling self-discipline; drugs sold on street corners as freely as soda, and guns as available as drugs; and the whole mess a Gordian knot resisting solutions and ready to explode in the outer cities as random violence and in the inner city as rioting and looting.

The cost of AFDC may not be astronomical, but it is devastating in terms of spinoffs such as children who ultimately end up in the criminal justice system, who are abused and neglected, or who simply live out their lives in despair on welfare themselves. To understand the underclass and the problems of the underclass, legislators, members of the administration, and other politicians should not read boring statistics which can be argued every which way. Instead, they should spend a few days, weeks, or even months in our criminal and juvenile justice courts in any moderate-sized city.

The Democrats have predictably blamed Ronald Reagan, who has become the liberals' favorite whipping boy for all the social ills facing our country. I suppose it is only fair that the liberals place the blame on him for the underclass because conservatives have excoriated LBJ's expansive and "irresponsible" programs for the same problems. But it does seem just a bit much for the liberals to shirk their own responsibility, when it was we, liberals, who hushed up the "Moynihan Report" when its author warned us in 1965 of the coming underclass syndrome.

The "Moynihan Report" was one of the earliest victims of political correctness. Moynihan pointed out what he perceived to be an alarming statistic—that 25 percent of all black children were being born to single moms. He also prophesied that the implications of this report could lead to increased misery among very poor African-Americans. In other words, although he didn't call it that, he was alluding to what has since been tagged as an underclass. The Left would have no part of Moynihan or his report, both of which were labeled as racist. What they were really saying is that we cannot openly discuss the implications of the report because so many Americans are racist, and they will surely take these statistics to mean that African-Americans are somehow less stable, less moral, less ethical, and less family-oriented than their white counterparts.

Instead of admitting to the problems of the underclass and welfare dependency, the Left purposely misstated the statistics, arguing that the majority of individuals on welfare are white. Of course this is true, but the vast majority of Americans are also white. When the statistics are studied realistically, it is clear that a welfare-dependent, primarily African-American underclass wallows in misery. The Bane/Ellwood studies show that

William Pitt Root

In the House of Denial

No fear here said the Chattering Teeth
no cruelty here the Thin Lips
nothing but love the Shrill Mother's Bruises
nothing but love that's better than nothing

No fear here said the Clenched Fist
no cruelty the Augers of Twisting Light
nothing but love the Heap of Staring Ashes
nothing but love that's better than nothing

No fear here cry the Knotted Fingers
no cruelty the Eyes Averted
nothing but love the Limping Child
nothing but love that's better than nothing

No fear here stutter the Split-lipped
no cruelty the Hands That Won't Stop Serving
nothing but love the Bulemic Daughter
nothing if not love the feast of love

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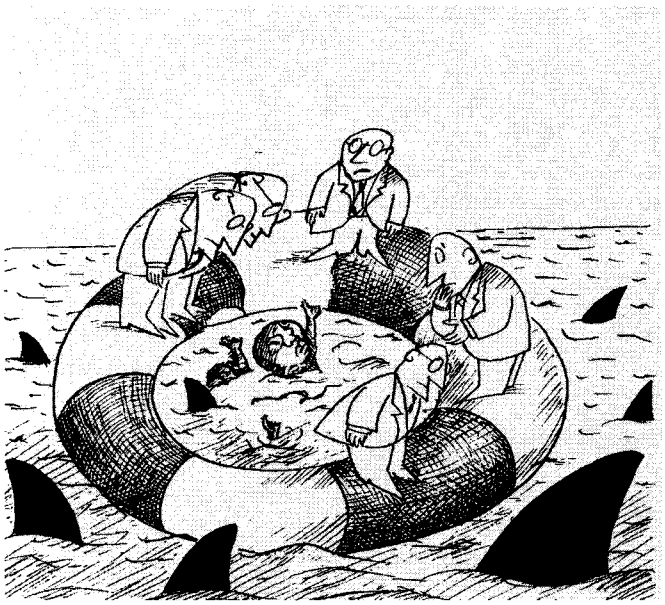

when first-time recipients of AFDC are broken down by race, 60 percent are white, 35.7 percent black. But at any one time, 48 percent of recipients are white and 47.5 percent are black, and of individuals on AFDC for more than ten years, 15 percent are white and 33.7 percent are black.

Most of the cases we see in juvenile court involve the underclass. Because in our major cities, the underclass is primarily African-American, the majority of our abused child clients are black. The problem is not racial, but neither is it economic. It is cultural. A culture of welfare-dependent individuals recycles their welfare dependency and misery to a new generation every fifteen years or so, and that population, for reasons dating back to slavery and segregation, is primarily African-American. If we do not stop now, examine the problem, and, as a society, try to do something about it, it will explode to haunt the rest of us and our children for generations to come.

The goal of welfare reform should not be to prevent women from having children, but to encourage teen-aged girls to make decisions based upon microeconomic realities, and to delay child bearing until they are adults who are capable of supporting their children. The argument that poor children are being singled out for punishment is garbage. AFDC checks go to moms, not kids. These mothers make decisions on how to spend the money and live off the checks as much as the children, and some times more. Most mothers receiving AFDC checks do use the money for the benefit of their children. But welfare cast as a children's issue makes questions of welfare dependency disappear.

Children, primarily from the underclass, are pouring into the juvenile court and child welfare bureaucracies, primarily because of the failures of our welfare system. I implore you to devise ways to cut down the federal bureaucracy and guidelines, which stifle creative thinking on the local level and which seem to exist only to uphold a politically correct philosophy, which no longer makes sense. □

REPORT FROM THE MIDDLE AGES

'CHANT AROUND THE CLOCK'

MONKS TOP THE CHARTS

It is inevitable, I suppose, that only a few of us church music troglodytes can still sight-sing Gregorian Chant from the neumatic notation on a four-line staff. All the more remarkable, then, has been the success of the album, "Chant," sung by the Spanish monks of Santo Domingo de Silos. It has sold 4 million copies in CD and cassette form. A double CD, the original issue in 1993, was moderately successful, but the single went over the top in the United States and worldwide.

I have heard (and sung, and conducted) some good chant in my time, in the minor and major seminaries in Saint Paul, as director of the cathedral choir in Corpus Christi, Texas, and as professor of music history and literature at Del Mar College, also in Corpus Christi. Rarely have I heard anything to match the performance of the monks of Santo Domingo de Silos. Their intonation is almost always perfect, their singing is carefully nuanced, and it is done with a conviction that fairly breathes their love of what they do, as a reflection of their profound faith.

Of the performances, more below. First, some context.

It is entirely fitting and proper (*dignum et justum est*, as we used to say) that it was a choir of Benedictines that brought about this musical *tour de force*. Only a choir of men or women dedicated to the chanting of the Divine Office seven times a day, with one or two Masses besides, and with a tradition of years adding up to centuries, could possibly achieve the artistic and devotional splendor of this very unexpected, but most welcome, musical offering.

It was their founder, Saint Benedict himself, who, about A.D. 500, gave the great impetus to the monastic movement, which established the critical structure of the church of the Middle Ages. This included the institution of the *scriptorium*, derived from the Roman administrator Cassiodorus, where all manuscripts, pagan and Christian, were sedulously copied, and where the chants of the early church were preserved for posterity. Besides, Benedict's Holy Rule prescribed the daily public chanting of the Mass and the Divine Office.

Immediately after Benedict, Pope Saint Gregory the Great, who scholars generally agree followed the Benedictine Rule, took broad initiatives in the administration of the Western church, including collection of the manuscripts of the chant which now bears his name. Although we may doubt that Gregory—a very busy man, pope, pastor, preacher, at times a general—wrote any of the music, he deserves the credit for collecting and preserving it.

Hardly any of the extant chants date from earlier than the ninth century, when Charlemagne, first emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, and a great lover of all learning, including music,

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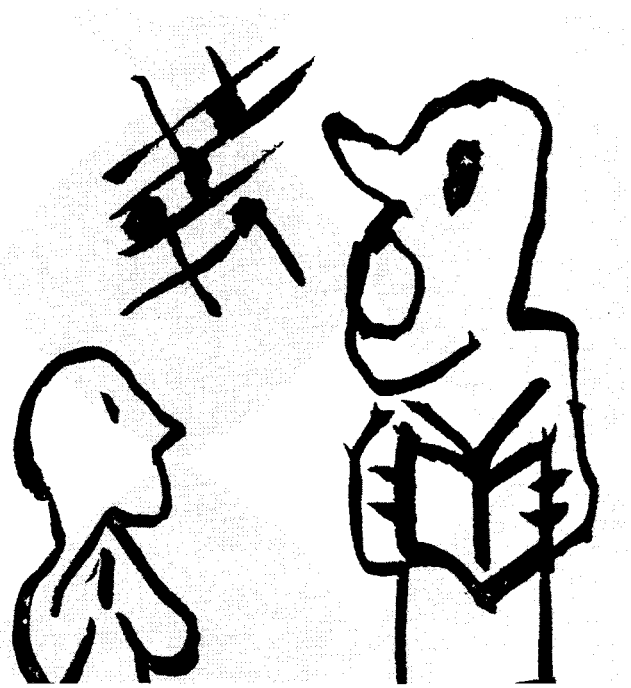
decreed the forms of the chant to be used throughout Europe. But while we cannot date with certainty anything before 800, it must be assumed that there was a continuum from the chants in Benedict's monastery at Monte Cassino—indeed, even from the synagogue music sung by Christ and the Apostles—to such popular chants as the Requiem Mass (thirteenth century) and the Mass of the Angels (fifteenth-sixteenth century).

It is axiomatic that old forms, whether of art or technology, give way to newer forms in the irrestistible march of history. About the year 1000 the austere unison chant began to be harmonized, possibly quite by the accident of some sleepy monks singing Matins below pitch, in the style we now call parallel organum. However it may have started, many-voiced music, the Western world's greatest contibution to music, gradually developed over the course of five centuries to the glories of Renaissance polyphony created by Palestrina and his contemporaries. And, though they continued to base many of their compositions on the Gregorian melodies, by 1600 the new music had, for all practical purposes, displaced the chant and it lay in dormant manuscripts in dusty monastic and cathedral archives for 200 years.

Again it was the Benedictine monks—notably of the Abbey of Sainte Pierre in Solesmes, France—who, through their scholarly researches in the *Paléographie Musicale*, brought back to the light of common day the vast treasury of the chant (some 3000 melodies, according to Dr. Willi Apel's latest edition of the *Harvard Dictionary of Music*), and the proper way to notate and sing it.

Sadly, in our day the chant has suffered another period of decline, almost unto death. The cause was a misreading of the first document published by the Second Vatican Council, the "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy" [*Sacrosanctum concilium*, December 1963]. In it the council fathers urged greater participation by the laity in the Mass through use of all the world's vernaculars. Most pastors in the United States took this encouragement of the vernacular as a commandment to discard the whole treasury of Catholic church music up to that point. As a result, we gradually abandoned not only the Gregorian Chant, sung at least passably in many of our churches, but also the Cecilian Latin Masses which abounded before the council, and—with apparently few regrets—the great classical and romantic orchestral Masses, which, by the way, still enhance the liturgy in Austria, Southern Germany, and various isolated spots elsewhere in Western Europe and the United States. At the same time, we abandoned the contemporary Latin Masses and motets that had only begun to reach us from Europe, notably from Holland, Belgium, France, and Italy.



We have had more than a generation now to try the new English-language music, with mixed results: some success in some parishes, and perceptible improvement in participation by the laity in the liturgy; but with a general lowering of musical standards.

Now that the dust of old arguments between church musicians and liturgists has settled, and we can sing, or speak, pretty well what we please, or whatever we are capable of, in Latin or the vernacular, it seems high time for a new renaissance of sacred music, including the now familiar hymns and responses and ordinaries in English, as well as much Latin music, for chorus, for chorus and organ or orchestra or both, which we have not heard for a long, long time. And (need I say it?) the Gregorian Chant. The overwhelming success of the "Chant" album by the Spanish monks can point the way to a new millennium of good music of all kinds.

Now, back to the recordings. The original double disc was recorded in the monastery church and is now available in the United States from Musical Heritage Society (P.O. Box 1408, Asbury Park, N.J. 07712, listed as No. 5233698K). The single disc was released by Angel Records as CDC 7243 5 55138 2 3, and is available everywhere records are sold.

The performers—the monks who sing the chants—retain their medieval and monastic anonymity. Only the directors' names are known: Ismael Fernandez de la Cuesta and Francisco Lara.

The single, best-seller CD includes nineteen separate chants, selected from the thirty-two on Musical Heritage's double CD. It presents examples of all chant styles, from the purely syllabic—i.e., one note (occasionally two or three) per syllable of text—to the highly melismatic, in which a syllable of text may carry a melisma (Gr.: song) over numerous notes. Also represented are seven of the eight modes of chant, early scales from which our modern major and minor scales evolved.

Several major feasts of the church year are represented, including four chants for Christmas, two for Pentecost, and four for various days in Holy Week. Unfortunately, in most cases it's difficult for anyone but a Latinist familiar with the liturgy to identify which feasts go with which chants. I cannot fault the people at Angel for this lacuna in their album insert; most people in the vast audience they visualized would not be interested in the arcana of the chant. But I would feel within critical bounds to scold the Musical Heritage people for their similar neglect.

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Help was on the way, however; somebody in the Angel organization saw to it that Dr. Katherine Le Mée, a lover of all things medieval, wrote a fine little book for Bell Tower (titled, like the album, *Chant*) to appear simultaneously with the Angel release, identifying the feasts and providing translations of all the texts. It also has a good brief history of Gregorian Chant, and quite a lot of interesting information on the physical and psychological benefits to be derived from listening to this kind of music.

So if you have $15 for the book, after already laying out another $15 for the Angel, and a further $26 if you go for the Musical Heritage double, you're all set to enjoy, probably charge-up your psychic batteries, and possibly throw in a modicum of devotion as you listen to this sublime chant.

RALPH THIBODEAU

Ralph Thibodeau, a previous contributor, is writing a book on the Joan of Arc operas.

REPORT ON IRISH FILMS

A DIFFERENT VOICE

AN INDUSTRY IS BORN

With a national population smaller than that of many U.S. cities, Ireland is nonetheless internationally renowned for its cultural contributions. In recent years, chief among these is its reinvigorated film industry. Despite the successes of movies like *My Left Foot* and *The Commitments*, film production in Ireland remained fairly sporadic until 1993. That year, ten feature films, including *In the Name of the Father* and *Widow's Peak*, went into production. Last year, the number rose to eighteen, including *An Awfully Big Adventure* starring Hugh Grant, *A Man of No Importance* with Albert Finney, and Mel Gibson's *Braveheart*. The current period of unprecedented production marks, according to film scholar Kevin Rockett, an "Irish moment in the timeline of international filmmaking."

There are several reasons for this phenomenal growth in Irish film production: the rich beauty of the country's landscape, Ireland's well-educated, English-speaking workforce, and the generous tax incentives enacted in 1993 that succeeded in enticing foreign filmmakers. As well, the Irish government has established a new film board that provides direct funding for Irish filmmakers and has helped revitalize the country's indigenous film industry.

Government support of film is part of a determined effort to put the arts and culture at the center of Irish economic policy. In 1993, after becoming convinced that the film industry could create significant numbers of jobs in Ireland, Albert Reynolds, then the prime minister, appointed a cabinet-level minister for the arts and culture and quickly set the development of the film industry as a top priority.

The growth of the film industry, propelled as it is by aggressive government policies, reflects an uncharacteristic Irish boldness. By touting their films and eagerly competing in the international market, the Irish seem to have broken free from the debilitating side of their social psyche with its self-doubt, begrudgery, and insecurity. Their film ambitions suggest that the Irish are no longer resigned to the perceived fate of their country—a fate that commands the young and talented to leave, and condemns those who stay to a disappointing life. Two generations removed from English colonialism, the Irish are at a coming-out stage in their cultural evolution.

This coming-out has been assisted by the peace process in Northern Ireland. With the Republic of Ireland finally crawling out from the shadow of that conflict, the world is discovering a wealth of Irish stories and themes. According to James Mitchell of Little Bird Productions (*Into the West* and *A Man of No Importance*), "Irish films have a special appeal because they have a different voice." It is also a new voice, explains Mitchell, since it seeks to reverse the "leprechaun view" of Ireland created by American films like *The Quiet Man* and *Finian's Rainbow*—a view that sees the Irish as backward, violent, and downtrodden. In place of these stereotypes, Irish filmmakers are striving to present a far more complex, modern picture of their society. *The Snapper* and *The Commitments* dealt with Ireland's urban working class, neglected by foreign filmmakers who often portrayed a rural Ireland.

Discovering their own voice allows Irish filmmakers to convey unique and compelling messages. According to director Jim Sheridan (*In the Name of the Father*), the Irish "are one of the few white people on the earth who have been colonized enough to understand that feeling." The experience of colo-

Jean Gallagher

Particular Annunciation

(Or, We Discuss Having a Child)

The thought arrives like Gabriel with his
art deco wings, sleek as glazed porcelain,
striped and full of eyes as a hallucination,
and not seeming suited for flight: *I could do it.*

In a particular Annunciation
she and the angel bow politely, hands
crossed flat over flat chests, two businessmen
in gracious, wary negotiation.
Neither speaks. She appears blank as a drum,
poker-faced, noncommittal. But the open porch
where they incline toward each other hums
like a force field. Framed in her separate arch,
the speckled, burnished light around her head hovers,
contained but expandable, and says, think it over.

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nization gives the Irish the ability to tell powerful stories about suffering: *In the Name of the Father* told a tale of gross injustice; *Into the West* the trials of being a minority; and *My Left Foot* the struggles of a handicapped person. Yet these stories speak not only of suffering but of survival and triumph.

Among the themes that have emerged in recent Irish films are love and sex. In Catholic Ireland, traditional social and moral attitudes toward sex still include legal restrictions on divorce, contraception, and abortion. The Irish have long struggled to accommodate their individual passions to the strict morality (and laws) of their community.

This struggle may produce what others call neurosis, but it also provides for dramatic love stories in which the lovers must battle ingrained social taboos. In several recent films, a recurring theme has been the struggles of an unwed mother who, despite strong community pressure, refuses to identify and marry the father of her child. In *Playboys*, the woman defies such pressure and holds out for the visiting actor with whom she has fallen in love. In *December Bride*, a willful female servant in turn-of-the-century Ireland moves into the house of two brothers, becomes pregnant, and refuses to reveal which of the men is the father. In the soon-to-be-released *Frankie Starlight*, based on Chet Raymo's novel, *The Dork of Cork*, a young woman trying to go to America finds herself stranded and pregnant in Cork, where she gives birth to a dwarf.

Their tradition of sexual restraint and purity enables the Irish to portray innocence and virginity in their stories. In *A Man of No Importance*, a Dublin bus driver who directs productions of Oscar Wilde's plays becomes convinced that his lead actress in *Salome* is in real life a virginal princess. Even when he hears moans from behind her rooming-house door, he thinks she is ill. *The Snapper* portrays the sexual naiveté of a father as he realizes during his unmarried daughter's pregnancy that he is ignorant of the finer details of female anatomy.

The Irish are particularly attuned to the spiritual dimensions of life. *Into the West* is a film about two boys who ride a magical horse to the west of Ireland, leading their widowed father on a journey back to his roots and to a new love.

Despite the richness of these Irish themes, Kevin Moriarty, chief executive of Ireland's newly expanded Ardmore Studios, sees Irish filmmakers eventually producing films more universal than Irish. "Everyone knows that Hollywood makes the most successful movies in the world, [because] their application is universal," Moriarty says. "And that's what I believe will ultimately happen here."

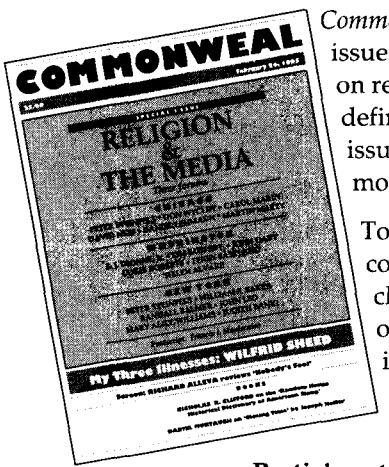
Indeed, that trend is already appearing. Young producers "want to get away from 'Irish-theme' films and move into more generic thriller-type movies that appeal to worldwide audiences," says Mark Kenney of Film-Makers, a Dublin-based film industry group. "Most writers and directors now want to go to Hollywood," he adds. He sees a shift in the type of film projects that younger filmmakers are undertaking. "While Irish filmmakers in the past have tended toward bleak movies, they are now shifting to comedies and action films." In *Limo Man*, a romantic comedy, Gabriel Byrne, a Dublin taxi driver, falls for a Hollywood movie star.

These aspiring Irish filmmakers, however, may be selling both their culture and American audiences short. For it is the "Irish" quality only they can portray that appeals to American moviegoers. The growing success of their films in the United States demonstrates that Americans are quite receptive to genuine Irish themes. Now that the Irish seem willing to expose themselves and their culture through film, it would be a great loss if their filmmakers settle for the Hollywood model.

PATRICK M. GARRY

Patrick M. Garry is a Minneapolis writer and lawyer. His latest book is Scrambling for Protection: The New Media and the First Amendment *(University of Pittsburgh Press).*

Religion & the Media



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Lasch's last testament

THE REVOLT OF THE ELITES
And the Betrayal of Democracy
Christopher Lasch
W. W. Norton & Co. $22, 276 pp.

Elizabeth Fox-Genovese

It is fitting that Christopher Lasch concludes *The Revolt of the Elites and the Betrayal of Democracy* with an essay on religion, "The Soul of Modern Man under Secularism." As one who knew Lasch and admired his uncompromising critical spirit, I cannot but find it both moving and cautionary that this most skeptical of modern intellectuals came, with the approach of death, to sharpen his sense that the greatest modern temptation lies in the "illusion of mastery." This turn to religion does not constitute a confession of faith, much less a panicky return to the reassuring certainties of childhood prayers in the manner of Roger Martin Du Gard's *Jean Barrois*. For as Lasch insists, the last thing that religion (properly understood, he might have added) offers is certainty or security. Rather, the turn to religion should probably be read as a final, wry, and becomingly humble reflection upon the sanctimonious certainties that modern intellectuals readily propagate.

Thus, the end, in this instance as in so many others, should be taken as the author's own perspective on what precedes it. In *The Revolt of the Elites*, Lasch tersely and scathingly attacks the failures of modern society, notably the elites who direct, interpret, and feed off of it—what he calls "the dark night of the soul" through which the whole world seems to be passing. As several reviewers have already defensively noted, Lasch has nothing good to say about our contemporary elites, who owe their promotion to an ideology and practice of meritocracy that, in his view, has drained American society of the last vestiges of true democracy and the human communities from which it emerges.

Lasch charges meritocracy with freeing the elite from social connection and the obligations it entails and substituting a narrow goal of personal advancement as measured by the market. At his most scathing, he dismisses the feminism of the professional and managerial classes for which "female careerism provides the indispensable basis of their prosperous, glamorous, gaudy, sometimes indecently lavish way of life." In the same spirit, he castigates "academic radicals" who are mainly interested "in the defense of their professional privileges against criticism from the outside." They and their kind share a devotion to a careerism, which they celebrate as democracy in action, although it actually "tends to undermine democracy by divorcing knowledge from practical experience, devaluing the kind of knowledge that is gained from experience, and generating social conditions in which ordinary people are not expected to know anything at all."

Here, as throughout the book, Lasch betrays a lingering nostalgia for a world of

"They're so damn smug, looking down their noses all the time. They treat everybody *like vassals!"*

independent proprietorship, strong families, and vital "third places" (barbershops, corner bars, and other places of neighborhood sociability), which he sees as necessary to an engaged citizenry and a robust democracy. In this and other instances, *The Revolt of the Elites* suffers from uncertainty about the concepts on which it most heavily relies. If, for example, meritocracy lies at the root of our evils, what would Lasch put in its place? Much of his indictment of modernity might, with scant emendation, be attributed to the antebellum slaveholding elite. Yet neither here nor in his earlier work, does Lasch show much patience for, or much interest in, Southern society or thought. Nor has he ever defended any form of elitism, which he sharply attacks for its tendency to sever the bonds between members of the elite and ordinary people. *The Revolt of the Elites* is no complacent defense of an organic social hierarchy in which everyone accepts an ordained place, nor even a cranky nostalgia for the world of independent farms and shops.

We should, I think, miss the point, were we simply to focus upon Lasch's inconsistencies and occasionally intemperate outbursts, for the core of this book lies elsewhere. True, Lasch might have welcomed the return of a world without television sets and shopping malls, but he did not believe that the clock could be set back, nor would he have settled for a world without public schools and transportation, much less a world without seat-belts, air bags, or modern medicine. The focus of Lasch's attack remains, as it has always been, the excesses of a market that increasingly penetrates and appropriates not merely the business of everyday life, but the most intimate personal relations, and that is inexorably eroding our last vestiges of civic virtue and shared morality.

The problem for us, as for our early

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twentieth-century predecessors, remains "whether the virtues of proprietorship could be preserved, in some other form, under economic conditions that seemed to make proprietorship untenable." And for Lasch the virtues of proprietorship necessarily include a sense of personal responsibility, which he views as inherently antithetical to the current deplorable "privatization of morality." Although Lasch does not fully develop the connection, he suggests that privatized morality represents the ultimate triumph of the market, which is intrinsically incapable of establishing ethical standards, much less sustaining serious moral reflection. Personal responsibility requires the internalization of values and obligations that do not specifically reflect one's immediate self-interest. Privatized morality may too easily slip into the rationalization of one's immediate self-interest as in the cases of abortion, euthanasia, and murder undertaken in anticipated self-defense.

As throughout his distinguished career, Lasch offers more diagnosis—what some would call indictment—than prescriptions for cure. Ending where he began as the direct heir of the Progressive intellectuals he both admires and criticizes, he embodies the talents of the social critic rather than the politician or policy wonk. Thus, he reserves his harshest criticism for his fellow intellectuals, especially the academics whom he charges with abandoning not merely the life of the mind but the needs of most students. He scathingly dismisses the so-called compassion that leads many of his colleagues to refuse to impose standards upon others as "the human face of contempt"—a cynical acceptance of a double standard that does not expect others to attain what one expects of oneself. Such a meritocracy can only end in contempt for ordinary people, who are condemned to struggle with a dangerous and alienating world. No wonder they have lost faith in a democracy that no longer engages them in serious debate, that denies the validity of their experience, and that strips them of minimal respect.

The intellectual elite is not likely to take kindly to Lasch's parting jeremiad, which many will turn aside as evidence of bad temper or romantic attachment to a world that has gone beyond recall. Yet it is Lasch himself who writes, as if self-critically, "Disillusionment, we might say, is the characteristic form of modern pride, and this pride is no less evident in the nostalgic myth of the past than in the more aggressively triumphal version of cultural progress that dismisses the past without regrets." And, in so writing, he acknowledges his kindredship with those he most harshly calls to account, thereby calling himself to account as well.

The Revolt of the Elites has nothing in common with the new wave of "confessional criticism" in which intellectuals turn to their own experience to amplify and confirm their academic judgments. Lasch does not expose his personal experience, much less offer it to us as emblematic. Even his final evocation of religion refrains from proposing it as a panacea for current ills. Yet it embodies an extraordinary, if muted, example of the quintessential virtue of humility, if only by linking himself to those whose illusion of mastery he deplores. And his closing thought that the future of that illusion is "more problematical, certainly, than the future of religion" places the significance of secular intellectuals, including his own, in a sobering perspective. □

THE LAW AS OBSTACLE COURSE

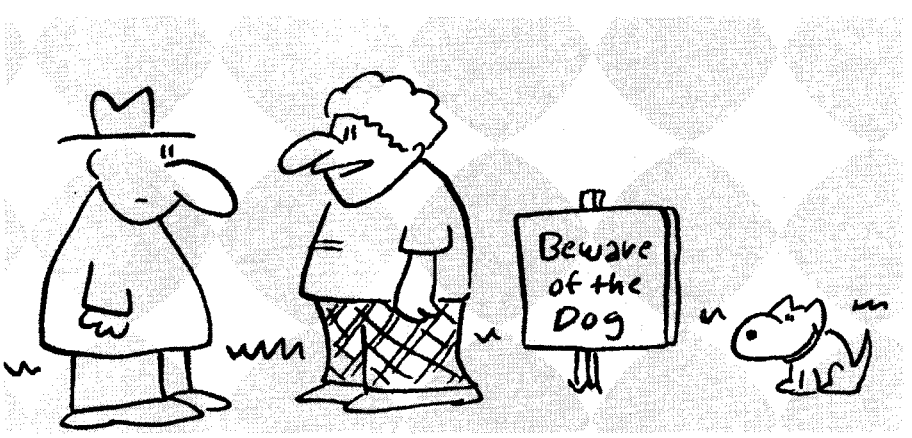
THE DEATH OF COMMON SENSE
How Law is Suffocating America
Philip K. Howard
Random House, $18, 202 pp.

Mary Ann Glendon

Philip Howard begins his indictment of proliferating regulatory law with the story of a failed attempt by Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity to establish a homeless shelter in the South Bronx. The process of transferring an abandoned building from the City of New York to the order filled a year and a half with paperwork, meetings, and hearings. Then, after spending two years on renovations, the nuns (who avoid the use of modern conveniences whenever possible) were told that the building code required a $100,000 elevator in their four-story structure. There was no way to waive the requirement. It didn't matter that the nuns never planned to use an elevator.

The struggle with American red tape was too much even for Mother Teresa. The sisters gave up on the project, explaining in a polite letter to the city that they needed to conserve their limited resources for feeding and sheltering the poor.

The stifling of that wholly benevolent project sets the stage for Howard's argument that American law has become an



"Don't let his looks fool you—he has a law degree."

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impediment, rather than an aid, to common-sense problem solving in our society. The principal victims of regulatory excess, he believes, are "small enterprises, poorer segments of society, and the spirit of ingenuity," which the country needs to deal with new challenges.

The main counts of Howard's indictment concern three good legal ideas run amok: specificity, process, and rights.

Much bureaucratic law is highly rigid and detailed. Think of tax law, building codes, or workplace health and safety regulations. Legal specificity has the virtues of letting those affected know where they stand and keeping official discretion within bounds. But when taken to extremes it can have the opposite effect. The law becomes incomprehensible, and official arbitrariness can run rampant amidst the confusion. Even when legal detail does promote certainty, it has costs. What particularly concerns Howard is that overly rigid regulation, by driving out human judgment, stifles "trial and error—the key to all progress." Since lawmakers rarely tidy up the work of their predecessors, these ills tend to worsen as one layer of regulation is piled upon another.

Howard's second target is a concept of process that increasingly subjects routine decisions like firing a civil service employee to judicial oversight almost as rigorous as that applied to criminal trials. His complaint here is that too many procedural obstacles (also known as safeguards) discourage individual responsibility while promoting inefficiency. Increasingly in our procedural republic, "the buck never stops."

Finally, Howard blasts the recent expansion, by courts and legislatures, of citizens' rights to sue public and private establishments for various forms of discrimination. Like many other critics of hyper-regulation, Howard finds much illustrative material in well-intentioned legislation designed to aid persons with disabilities. With one discouraging example after another, he shows how frequently the proliferation of rights has proved an unhappy substitute for pragmatic reflection on costs, efficacy, and priorities.

It is no mean achievement to portray a society suffocating in the toils of regulatory law without suffocating the non-specialist reader. Howard solves that problem nicely with abundant examples that will have most readers nodding their heads in agreement as they recall their own run-ins with the administrative state and its legal apparatus.

Where the book comes up short is on the jacket's promise to "set us on a course to take back control of our lives." Howard's brief concluding chapter, titled "Releasing Ourselves," offers little more than an admonition that principles and common sense are better than detailed regulations and rigid formulas. A few sentences from the final paragraph give the flavor: "[W]e have to go out and try to accomplish our goals and resolve disagreements by doing what we think is right. That energy and resourcefulness, not millions of legal cubicles, is what was great about America. Let judgment and personal conviction be important again....It's just common sense."

Well, yes. But a country with a complex economic system and a large diverse population does need a rather elaborate legal system. Common sense, as philosopher Bernard Lonergan points out in *Insight*, is a fine thing, but will only get you so far, especially in times of crisis and change: "Common sense knows, but it does not know what it knows nor how it knows, nor how to correct and complement its own inadequacies." That's why Howard is on the right track when he emphasizes the importance of leaving room for trial and error, and (by implication) of admitting how much we do not know about the effectiveness and unintended consequences of law.

To minimize the problems Howard describes, Americans (not just lawyers) would have to re-examine some basic decisions made in this century about regulation, federalism, and the relation between the state and civil society. Some of the most important decisions are about whether to regulate at all, who should do the regulating, and how closely and by whom regulators ought to be supervised. Many current legal ills have arisen from violating what Christian social thought calls the principle of subsidiarity, according to which no task should be assigned to a group or institution larger than the smallest that can satisfactorily perform it.

When it comes to the "how" of regula-

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tion, the devil is not in details and procedures as such. The problem is to know when and how to deploy the various tools in the legal kit; how to arrive at the optimum mix of rules and discretion, generality and specificity, private ordering and public regulation. Unfortunately, those are highly difficult matters to which American lawyers and law schools have devoted too little attention. Like other Americans, we lawyers have grown impatient with fine detail and intolerant of complexity. As a result, we have tended to neglect the very skills that a society like ours most needs from the legal profession—preventive planning and creative problem solving.

Like printing money, handing out rights to special interest groups for thirty years has diminished not only the civil rights movement but the values on which it was founded. Rights, intended to bring an excluded group into society, have become the means of getting ahead of society. But everyone is losing. It is in the nature of continued conflict, as well as law's inadequacy as a vehicle to happiness, that the ostensible winners have found, not justice and fulfillment, but isolation and recrimination. □

A MONOLOGUE ON DIALOGUE

AIDS, GAYS, AND THE AMERICAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
Richard L. Smith
The Pilgrim Press, $14.95, 161 pp.

James L. Nash

Richard Smith has written a timely and well-intentioned book on the American Catholic response to AIDS, a topic which figures prominently in the current "culture wars." While some religious leaders have called the AIDS epidemic God's just punishment on promiscuously immoral homosexuals, America's Catholic bishops have repeatedly called for compassion and expanded treatment for people with AIDS. At the same time, the church's leaders have reaffirmed the traditional teaching that all homosexual acts are intrinsically evil, and remain opposed to the popular policy of promoting condoms and "safe sex" to limit the spread of the disease. This position has been greeted with contempt by AIDS activists such as the leaders of Act-Up.

Smith is critical of the (official) Catholic position, but he also emphasizes that American Catholicism has valuable moral resources to help us make sense of the illness. The church's "understanding of human community, its strong tradition of social justice, and its rich repertoire of myths, rituals, and symbols" can give meaning to human suffering and death, Smith writes. What is inadequate about the official church response is the bishops' reassertion of the "narrow metaphors of the Catholic sexual program and their unwillingness to dialogue with and respect other voices in the larger American culture, particularly the gay community."

Smith has the wit to recognize the church's understanding of AIDS is not exhausted by official episcopal pronouncements: he devotes a chapter to an examination of ordinary church people engaged in AIDS ministry. In what might be called a "postmodern" fashion, Smith admits that he did not attempt to be "objective" or "scientific" in either the selection of his sample, or in the conduct of the interviews. Using this methodology, he was pleased to discover that not a single person engaged in this pastoral work agreed with the bishops on the immorality of homosexual activity, and he expresses here the hope that one day the bishops will listen to these good Catholics.

Smith's stated intention is to find common ground between the gay community and the Catholic church on the AIDS question. He repeatedly praises the bishops for their compassion, and the church for its spiritual and material ministry. Yet as I read the book it seemed that beneath the appeal for reasoned dialogue and mutual understanding a tendentiousness was often at work. Smith's non-negotiable demand is that the church abandon its teaching on the immorality of homosexual activity. Dissent on this point is a kind of pluralism Smith does not approve.

Sociologist Robert N. Bellah writes in the foreword, "a principled rejection of gay sexuality, whether put forward by the church or any other sector of society, is morally indefensible." This appears to be, for Smith, an *a priori* exceptionless moral norm, an unquestioned presupposition. But since it is precisely this point which separates the two cultures, it is here I would have thought dialogue ought to begin. It is true that the church's traditional arguments for the absolute immorality of all gay sexuality are increasingly unconvincing to many people, but does it follow that it is now "morally indefensible" even to try to make the case? This sounds like the pope ruling out discussion of the ordination of women!

I suspect most people are as uncertain about the official church's condemnation of all homosexual acts as they are of the claim that being actively gay is of no more moral significance than being left-handed. Surely there is much to talk about here, but so long as either side demands total agreement with its position at the outset, we will never get the conversation under way.

Smith longs for dialogue, but only, it appears, on his own terms. The hierarchical church is repeatedly criticized for its failure to question its moral position, its rigidity and rejection of pluralism; but the gay culture is not subject to the same standards. In fact, there is virtually no critique of the gay community nor any recognition that pluralism in sexual ethics exists there as well.

For example, while there are many loving and committed homosexual couples, there are also those in the pluralistic gay community who reject the "we are just like you" brand of liberalism; they oppose the value of sexual fidelity as the unjust imposition of alien heterosexual norms. Nowhere in this book is the connection between sexual promiscuity, the gay

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lifestyle, and the spread of AIDS even discussed. Smith follows the modern practice of accepting *tout court* a technological solution (condoms) to what is, at least partially, a moral problem.

In the final chapter, "Battleground or Common Ground," Smith recalls the incident when Act-Up desecrated consecrated hosts at Saint Patrick's Cathedral in New York City, and claims to have discovered common ground between the desecrators and the faithful. He is critical of Act-Up's behavior, but he sees it as equivalent to the church's desecration of what gays find sacred, that is, their sexual activity. One wonders how many Catholics will recognize as "common ground" a position which sees equal sacredness in the body of Christ and gay sex.

The ambiguity of Smith's call for dialogue is echoed in the inconsistent way he uses "facts"—sometimes enclosing them in "postmodern" quotation marks, sometimes not. The author believes there is no such thing as objective, value-free scientific truth. Thus, the manner in which the Catholic church has construed homosexuality and AIDS reflects the way cultural biases appropriate scientific "facts" to support a position. Smith here makes the very astute (postmodern) point that the issue is not whether cultural bias should shape the use of "facts" about AIDS, since any construction of AIDS will be affected by such bias. The real question is the validity of the bishops' sexual-cultural norms. This is certainly the right question to ask, although by now the reader has no doubt about what the answer will be.

How to determine the validity of the Catholic sexual ethic? By facing facts, of course, only this time without the ironic quotation marks, because postmodern irony stops when it comes to making one's own case. Smith argues that a respect for the validity of the other's point of view is an essential precondition for dialogue. This sounds exactly right. But for all his stated desire to find common ground, the author actually ends up demonstrating the futility of dialogue between the official church and the gay sexual ethic. Far from bridging the cultural divide between the two groups, this book is rather an illustration of how difficult genuine dialogue has become. □

CRUISE CONTROL

CONOR
A Biography of Conor Cruise O'Brien
Donald Harman Akenson
Cornell University Press, $35, 563 pp.

CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN
An Anthology
Edited by Donald Harman Akenson
Cornell University Press, $39.95, 351 pp.

Gerald J. Russello

When Conor Cruise O'Brien was ten years old, his father died before his eyes. While in the Congo representing the United Nations many years later, he was a major player in the events surrounding the death of his hero Dag Hammerskjöld. Donald Harman Akenson, in his biography of the Irish writer, critic, newspaper editor, politician, and diplomat, uses these deaths to mark the development of O'Brien both as a writer and as a man. His father's death in 1927 put his widow, Kathleen neé Sheehy, and young son at the mercy of the family creditors. O'Brien subsequently learned to rely on his wits, and used that self-confidence and talent to support himself through Trinity College by obtaining an astounding series of awards, fellowships, and prizes. In later years, after he had started a family of his own, O'Brien rarely tempered his opinions to keep himself employed, for he believed he could always find something else—and usually did.

Before Hammerskjöld's death, O'Brien had been merely a clever career Irish diplomat. The attempts of the UN to make him a scapegoat for its failures in Africa and the inexplicable death of another father-figure changed his life. In 1961 he publicly resigned from the Irish foreign service and the United Nations with a two-part apologia published in the *New York Times* and *London Observer*, thereby breaking all rules of diplomatic confidentiality. His resignation ended O'Brien's period of surreptitious essay writing under the pseudonym "Donat O'Donnell." He now was free to use his own name and to create a public persona independent of the foreign service.

The marks of his African experience were evident even a decade later, as O'Brien searched for meaning in Hammerskjöld's death, as well as in his long campaign against terrorism in Ireland during the 1970s. The Congo remained for O'Brien a vivid reminder of what can befall a nation rent by violent secessionist impulses.

His first marriage, to Christine Foster, whom he had met and married during college, was another personal casualty of the Congo, although the couple had been distant for some time before the divorce.

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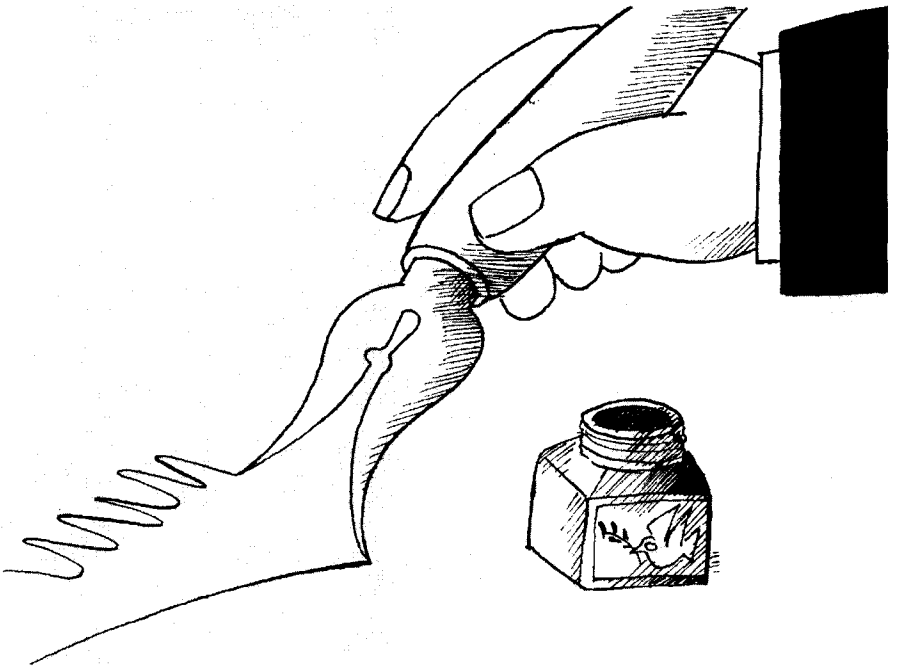

She was from the North, of a strongly Protestant family, though (like O'Brien) an agnostic. O'Brien subsequently married the poet and fellow Irish diplomat Maire MacEntee in 1962, soon after leaving Africa. About the same time, Christine also remarried. Akenson deals with the intimate details of this period with grace and tact, while not sparing any information that bears on the evolution of O'Brien's thought, especially about the Protestants in the North.

First, however, Akenson begins with a thorough account of O'Brien's heritage, searching for reasons why his subject is the most unusual yet most appropriate critic of Irish life. O'Brien's roots lie deep in Irish history: the Sheehys were strong in both their Catholicism and their commitment to Irish nationalism. An eighteenth-century ancestor, Father Nicholas Sheehy, was martyred for the cause of an independent Ireland, and later O'Brien's maternal grandfather broke with a disgraced Parnell in the famous "Committee Room 15." The Sheehy house was home to a literary club for their children, where James Joyce was a frequent guest. O'Brien's father knew Yeats. This intellectual heritage provides the background for O'Brien's lifelong interest in both literature and politics. The agnosticism and pacifism of certain of O'Brien's immediate relatives, given the Ireland of the time, are even more conspicuous. And as O'Brien himself has pointed out, there is a familial relationship between this same Father Sheehy and the Burke family, whose most prominent member watched the corrupt Sheehy trial from afar. The Burkes were cousins to the Sheehys, and so relations, though distant, to O'Brien himself, a fact that makes his 1992 study of Edmund Burke, *The Great Melody*, all the more revealing.

The striking thing about both Burke and his contemporary cousin is their ability to cut through political and intellectual dissimulation and propaganda. Burke's contemporaries could not understand his sympathies with Irish and Indian subjects as they chafed under British rule; nor could O'Brien's contemporaries understand his insistence that Ireland could not and should not be united without the consent of the Protestants in the North. O'Brien revealed to a largely resentful and uncomprehending Ireland that, for all the South's anticolonialist posturing, their approach to the North resembled British colonialism. The Irish Republic's disregard for the opinions of the Northern Protestants was the moral equivalent of Protestant oppression of Catholics in the North.

In his youth, O'Brien was part of the Southern propaganda machine encouraging unity at any price. His view changed in the mid-1950s, when he was assigned to the Irish embassy in France, which at the time was going through its own colonialist troubles in Algeria. "Conor began to change his definition of colonialism, from a characteristic of the British to something inherent in Western cultures....[T]his was the first stage in his developing realization that imperialism is a set of behaviors that can emerge in any country," Akenson writes. O'Brien's insight, as he developed it throughout the sixties, was that a colonial system not only results in physical violence, but is itself a form of psychological violence directed at weaker peoples by stronger ones.

O'Brien's writings on the twin problems of colonialism and terrorism are an expression of his understanding of the writer's political role. Reason and the written word must be the tools used to keep barbarism as bay. His defense of academic freedom while serving as chancellor of the University of Ghana gave him a new understanding of the social anarchy that lay below any society's veneer of civilization. Indeed, Akenson credits O'Brien with averting a war between the Irish Republic and the North in the early 1970s, as a result of his unceasing crusade—which Akenson more than once calls "Pauline"—against the use of violence to solve the problem of unification, a stand that earned him great enmity in some quarters.

The writer cannot be separated from politics, as O'Brien demonstrated in his examination of Yeats's fascism and in his own confrontations with the CIA-supported magazine, *Encounter*. Power, he wrote in 1966, "needs the stimulus and correction of criticism," lest it become depraved, and O'Brien has spent his life providing such corrective to a jaded world. □

REVIEWERS

ELIZABETH FOX-GENOVESE *is the author of* Feminism without Illusions. *She teaches at Emory University in Atlanta.*

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With cries to the Lord

Lawrence S. Cunningham

The First Urban Christians (1983) by Yale's Wayne Meeks was one of the most helpful books on the New Testament that I read in the past decade. His *Origins of Christian Morality* makes a fitting companion to that estimable work. Meeks's aim is to undertake what he calls an "ethnographic project." To make that happen he sets out a number of parameters. First, he does not attempt a definition of Christian morality; he desires, rather, to sketch out the "rough contours of that morality in its formative decade." Second, his book is not about ethics—morality made self-conscious—but about that dimension of life made up of value-laden dispositions, inclinations, attitudes, and habits. Third, Meeks shares a conviction with contemporary philosophers like Martha Nussbaum and Alasdair MacIntyre that the building of morality is inextricably tied to the building of community, which is to say that morality broadly conceived is connected to a tradition of morality.

Meeks's strategy is to provide us with close readings of both canonical and non-canonical literature on a wide range of subjects, from the dialectic of love/hate for the world to the problem of the body, the "grammar" of Christian practice, the sense(s) of the endtime, and ritualized moral narratives and their place within the communities of believers. Meeks understands that it is very difficult to say what is distinctive about Christian moral practices (most of the moral observations have parallels in either pagan or Jewish sources or both) but he is at pains to attempt a description of what he calls the "Christian sensibility."

The Origins of Christian Morality: The First Two Centuries, *by Wayne A. Meeks, Yale University Press, $30, 275 pp.*

What I found most provocative about this very enlightening book are some final theses he sets out by way of reflection on his completed tour of the first two Christian centuries. At the risk of simplification I will sum them up in this fashion: the making of a morality must always be seen in dialectical relationship with the making of community. Our understanding of the early Christian moral community must be grounded in its past, especially in the Jewish experience. Faithfulness to the past must not be confused with nostalgia for a bygone "Golden Age" since early Christian morality is, in his words, "polyphonic" and morality requires not moral certainty but moral confidence. Finally, the God of the Bible "will astonish those who are loyal to the story of God's past actions, but will not abandon them."

I recommend this wonderful book for both the clarity of its prose and its plan of execution; for the fruitfulness of its reading of texts; and for the utility of its conclusions. A most satisfying work.

Martini's most recent book is scriptural commentary of a completely different sort. An accomplished biblical scholar, Martini is now the cardinal-archbishop of Milan. As part of his pastoral ministry he regularly gives short courses for Milanese audiences which are carried on the radio. This present volume consists of a series of talks he gave on the Johannine story of the wedding at Cana and a later short course on some passages in the Gospel of Mark.

What most interests me about Martini's book is not so much his biblical reflections (although they are carefully rendered and sophisticated readings of the texts in question) but the method he proposes for reading the Scriptures in the church. In an interesting introductory chapter, Martini notes that there is an old monastic tradition of reading the Scriptures sapientially (the so-called *lectio divina*). A medieval Carthusian, Guigo II, wrote that reading should lead to meditation which energizes prayer and leads to contemplation. To those four stages, Martini says one should also add the experience of consolation and discretion which triggers, in turn, deliberation and, finally, action.

The Joy of the Gospel: Meditations for Young People, *by Carlo Maria Martini, Liturgical Press, $8.95, 107 pp.*

Obviously, these "stages" are not fol-

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lowed in any lock-step fashion. The point that Martini urges is that the prayerfully contemplative reading of Scripture should urge us to both personal and social action. Those conversant with the history of spirituality will immediately recognize that what Martini has done (true to his own Ignatian heritage) is to marry the old monastic *lectio* to the Jesuit notion that a person should be a "contemplative in action." Even Martini's custom of ending his conferences with points for further consideration and prayer reveals the influence of Ignatius's *Exercises*.

Properly understood, Martini's approach might prove helpful both for individuals and groups. Both in his method and in his reflections on the Scriptures, he brings forth, like the good householder of the Gospel, old things and new.

Miller's book is an exhaustive taxonomy of the diverse prayer forms found in the Bible. As a professor of Old Testament he is more at home in that part of the Bible but does provide us with a substantial chapter on the further "witness of the New Testament." His notes reflect a command of the scholarly sources but his intended audience is not scholars.

Miller goes through the Bible, sorting out the various kinds of prayers, providing, with each type of prayer, copious examples from the biblical text. In passing, he also discusses times of prayer, gestures of prayer, distinctions between public and private prayer, liturgy and devotion, etc. To contextualize his discussion, he has some nice pages on other forms and acts of prayer from the cultural milieu in which the ancient Israelites found themselves.

They Cried to the Lord: The Forms and Theology of Biblical Prayer, *by Patrick D. Miller, Augsburg/Fortress Press, $24, 464 pp.*

It takes what the Buddhist would call "mindfulness" to read these chapters sequentially, given the vast amount of information Miller provides. In that sense, at least, the work might prove more useful as a resource since a reading from cover to cover (which is the way I did it) somewhat overwhelms with the generous citations and leisurely pace. At times I found myself a bit bogged down in the welter of detail.

The book is extremely interesting, however, for its exegesis of texts, their classification (especially his careful attention to the root meaning of Hebrew words), and Miller's steady awareness that he is not writing for scholars but for pastors, students of the Bible, and those interested in the life of prayer. While his categories are not surprising (petition, lament, doxology, etc.), his angle of vision is fresh. I especially liked chapter 4, where he views prayer from the angle of God (that is, how the Bible has God answering the prayers offered to God) rather than from the perspective of the pray-er. Chapter 6 has an illuminating treatment of women at prayer in the Bible. It should come as no surprise that he is especially concerned with the psalter.

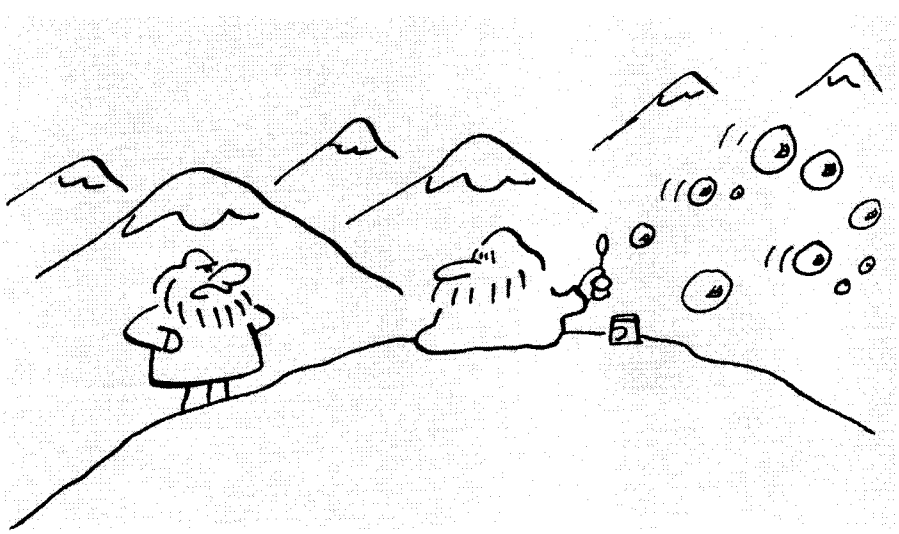
The book has an exhaustive scriptural index but, alas, not a topical or subject one. This book will find an honored place on my shelf of biblical reference works. I would especially commend it to those who have a keen interest in spirituality.

I was just finishing Miller's thorough work when Jim Castelli's little book came to me in page proofs. Castelli had the good idea of asking people from a wide range of religious backgrounds about how they prayed. It should not surprise us that Jews pray Jewishly, Christians Christianly, and Buddhists pray not at all (they meditate). Beyond the obvious, however, there are certain common threads that run through the book. Prayer is seen as not only worship but as an integrating factor that gives coherence to life. Prayer demands discipline of ordering time but it can also arise in the midst of the quotidian. Prayer derives both from the common memory and use of a tradition as well as the deeply personal articulation coming from one's own experience.

How I Pray, *edited by Jim Castelli, Ballantine (Random House), $9, 208 pp.*

There are things in this book which I fully expected and some that I didn't. Why does it not surprise me, for instance, that Martin Marty tells us that he prays every morning at 5:59 A.M.? Why did it surprise me to learn that Norman Lear prays each morning while on his exercise machine and that the prayer he recites is the one ascribed to Saint Francis ("Lord, make me an instrument...," a prayer mentioned by others in this book.)? Why was I heartened ecumenically to know that the Quaker, Richard Foster, cites the Orthodox "Jesus Prayer" as his favorite while the Russian Orthodox contributor cites John 3:16 as her favorite Scripture verse?

Many things can be learned from a



"I have to watch you every minute, don't I?"

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work ranging from the Hindu stages of life or centeredness to the normative books of prayer of church and synagogue to the deep richness of Buddhist meditation. I copied out some blessings cited by Rabbi Kushner but was also pleased to know that a Catholic convert like Jane Redmont finds much richness in them. It was wonderful to read about the prayer life of Charismatic Christians and a Mormon psychiatrist. The old monastic writer, Evagrius of Pontus, said that the person who prayed was the true theologian. Jim Castelli has provided us with some excellent first-person narratives of these authentic theologians going about their daily lives in the presence of the One whom they lovingly and faithfully address.

Finally, let me note a little book by Millard Fuller who is the founder and head of Habitat for Humanity. An Evangelical Christian, first associated with Clarence Jordan's Koinonia Community in Georgia, Fuller has spent the last thirty years spearheading a movement to build decent housing for the poor. The houses are built by a combination labor force of volunteers and the future homeowners who provide "sweat equity" and pay back the expenses through a kind of interest-free mortgage. First started near Americus, Georgia, Habitat now builds houses all over the world and ranks seventeenth in the home construction business.

The Theology of the Hammer, *by Millard Fuller, Smyth & Helwys, N.P., 153 pp.*

The idea behind Habitat is very simple: Faith must be incarnated, and one incarnation is that of housing the poor. The genius of the organization is that it brings together diverse Christian churches to *work* together (last summer here in South Bend they had an all-women's crew build a house). It also has the laudable principle of tithing contributions to their work and setting aside those tithes to build houses in the poorest parts of the world.

Fuller's book weaves together two themes: his own personal story of conversion to an activist Christian life and the larger story of the rise of Habitat from its beginnings in the Koinonia Community (an interracial, radical Christian community started in the 1940s). Fuller pays tribute to the intellectual roots of his own theological vision: the radical discipleship preached by Clarence Jordan; the Social Gospel of Walter Rauschenbusch; the simple gospel activism of Albert Schweitzer; and the writings of Catholics Henri Nouwen, Thomas Merton, and Dorothy Day (Day had been a longtime supporter of Koinonia, especially in the dark days of Klan activism in the 1940s and 1950s).

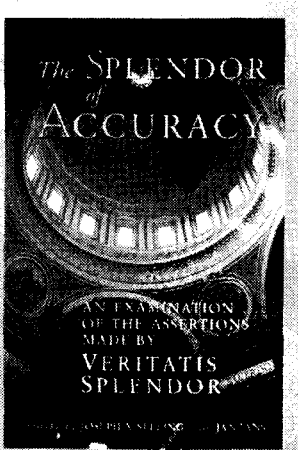
This is an *edifying* book (in many senses). It may be obtained from the publisher at 1400 Coleman Avenue/Macon, Georgia 31207. Read the book and support the movement. It is a worthy project. □

The SPLENDOR *of* ACCURACY

AN EXAMINATION OF THE ASSERTIONS MADE BY VERITATIS SPLENDOR

Edited by Joseph A. Selling *and* Jan Jans

POPE JOHN PAUL II'S ENCYCLICAL *VERITATIS SPLENDOR* clarified a number of questions about the moral teachings of the post–Vatican II Church, but it has not been received without some serious reservations. The contributors to this timely and much-needed book — all leading Roman Catholic theologians — clearly interpret key statements made by the encyclical and assess the overall accuracy of its moral claims and vision, demonstrating in the process the true significance of this encyclical for Christians today.



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CORRESPONDENCE

(Continued from page 2)

due mostly to the reader, and not to the poets. Still, I found Nancy G. Westerfield's "Salad Days" [February 10] to be a poignant treatise on a commonplace experience. She revealed the reality behind that experience in a way I had not expected. That's what I expect from poetry, and I am grateful for having received it here.

Speaking of poetry, Nathan Mitchell's description of "the liturgy of the world" in the same issue was exactly that. It was a joy to read—and reread. I hope I get the opportunity to quote it at some point. Perhaps poetry is the best medium for speaking of ritual in the first place.

JOSEPH G. BACHAND

Pioneer Fund defended

New York, N.Y.

To the Editors: My comments concern the article "Strange 'Bell' Fellows," by Jack Fischel [February 10]. Mr. Fischel, who is said to teach history, apparently is unable to distinguish history from hysteria. In only three sentences of the fifth paragraph of his sidebar, he makes totally false allegations about (1) the Pioneer Fund's supposed position on the *Brown* case, (2) the fund's supposed opposition to Head Start, (3) the fund's supposed contention as to genetic deficiencies, and (4) the fund's supposed view of remedial programs. I repeat, for Fischel and his readers, the statements made by him are false. None of those things happened, none existed, none are truthful.

As president of the Pioneer Fund, I would like to set the record straight.

The Pioneer Fund does not suggest research projects; it makes grants only after requests originate from the universities; it does not monitor the research or even ask for reports; it does not comment on the results even in cases where it learns of them; it does not have any publications; it does not make grants to individual scientists but only to responsible institutions which do monitor their own scientists; and it does not take positions on political issues of any kind. The fund stays strictly and totally hands-off.

Pioneer strives for excellence in research, and Pioneer-funded science itself is the mainstream, as confirmed by the statement "Mainstream Science on Intelligence" [*Wall Street Journal*, December 13, 1994], signed by fifty-two of the nation's leading experts on the subject from our leading institutions (fifteen of whom had received Pioneer support). Indeed, the twenty-three researchers who received Pioneer grants in the past ten years are among the most eminent scientists in their respective fields. Two are among the five most-cited living psychologists in the world. Most have won awards and honors from, among others, the Guggenheim Foundation, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and the American Psychological Assocation.

All nine who are members of the APA (and who received two-thirds of all Pioneer money grants in the past decade) have been elected to fellow status in that organization for their "outstanding and unusual contributions" to psychology (an honor held by less than 7 percent of the APA's 80,000 members). These nine individuals alone have published more than 100 scholarly books and 1,000 scientific articles. Three are on the editorial board of the academic journal *Intelligence*. Sixteen Pioneer grantees are listed in the references of a major current college text on intelligence. A Pioneer scientist won a Nobel prize; another was elected president of the APA. Twin and adoption studies funded by Pioneer have become famous, and are reflected today in standard high school and college textbooks on relevant subjects. Seminal studies have been funded in other fields, such as the effects of nutrition on intelligence and the hereditability of certain major diseases.

Since Fischel teaches history, he should know a bit about historical research. However, in this instance he seems to have relied exclusively on secondary sources, and unfortunately these were gutter pieces—journalistic hysteria—which he could easily have found to be inaccurate. As primary sources, all the directors of Pioneer were available, and would have told him that these pieces were written without any support from a primary source, and were false. There is a wide gulf here between history and hysteria.

Fischel's students will learn nothing truthful from this part of his sidebar, but they could learn much about the methodology of historical research.

HARRY F. WEYHER

Also 'Mankind Quarterly'

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: Jack Fischel, whom you describe as a teacher of history at Millersville University, does not seem to be qualified to write about eugenics or *The Bell Curve*, let alone *The Mankind Quarterly*, which is a journal that covers anthropological topics and circulates to hundreds of university libraries around the world. Indeed, from what he writes he does not appear to have any familiarity whatsoever with that journal.

Fischel cites a nonacademic secondary source—a journalist named Charles Lane—to complain that "no fewer than seventeen researchers [cited in *The Bell Curve*] have contributed to *The Mankind Quarterly*." He further relies upon Charles Lane for the opinion that *The Mankind Quarterly* was "founded and funded by people...'who believe in the genetic superiority of the white race.'" Accepting this patently false judgment (if he took the trouble to read Lane's own twisted comments he would find that *The Mankind Quarterly* is guilty of having published articles which argue that Orientals obtain higher IQ scores than the contemporary white population of the United States—hardly "white supremacist"), he then grows so confident in his own eloquence as to throw in charges of "anti-Semitism" for good measure. I would challenge him to go back a quarter of a century since I took over the publication of *The Mankind Quarterly* to find anything even remotely "anti-Semitic" in its pages—or for that matter in the pages of any other journal or book that I have published. Indeed, respected Jewish and Israeli scholars regularly publish in these journals.

As is well known, most anthropology journals do not dare to touch the subject of racial differences. *The Mankind Quarterly* is proud that it is prepared to publish articles on this topic provided they are scholarly and well documented. Perhaps Fischel will take the trouble to peruse *The*

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Mankind Quarterly himself, before writing further scurrilous attacks on an established journal whose academic integrity is evidenced by the number of scholars who write in it and university libraries which subscribe to it. Maybe he was writing under the pressure of deadlines, but the result is not responsible journalism and most certainly not academic scholarship. I feel a deep concern for the students who take his classes. ROGER PEARSON

The writer is publisher of The Mankind Quarterly.

The author replies:

Mr. Weyher denies but does not attempt to refute my article's specific allegations about the Pioneer Fund. Insofar as he supports his denials, he does so by praising his institution's policies without reserve and by characterizing the sources I used as practitioners of "gutter journalism."

It is true (and, I think, obvious to readers) that my 1,200-word article was not a work of original scholarship and that I made use of secondary sources. One of them was *The Nazi Connection: Eugenics, American Racism, and German National Socialism*, by Stefan Kühl (Oxford University Press, 1994). Kühl is a sociologist and historian at the University of Bielefeld, Germany; his book documents the influence of the American eugenics movement on Nazi racial policy; in the course of doing so, it places the Pioneer Fund in its historical and contemporary context.

The Nazi Connection has piqued the interest of a number of American journalists in the history of the Pioneer Fund, among them Charles Lane, a senior editor of the *New Republic* and the author of "The Tainted Sources of the Bell Curve," a lengthy, amply footnoted article on which I also relied [*New York Review of Books*, December 1, 1994]. Also of interest is an exchange of letters between Charles Lane and two critics of his article, Harry Weyher and Richard Lynn, published in the *New York Review* for February 2, 1995. Fortunately, these materials are readily available, so that interested readers may judge the reliability of my sources for themselves; my own view is that calling them examples of "gutter journalism" is more than a bit desperate.

On substance, Mr. Weyher writes that I falsely accused the Fund of opposing Head Start and other remedial programs, and of opposing the integrationist position in the *Brown* v. *Board of Education* case.

(1) In a letter published in the London *Independent* in 1989, Mr. Weyher argued that equalizing the environments of the races will not help reduce cognitive differences between them; the effect of the letter is to support the case for abandoning compensatory education, one of the objectives of Head Start. The Pioneer Fund has provided more than a million dollars in grants to Arthur Jensen, a leading advocate of the view that poor academic performance of black students was caused by irreversible genetic deficiencies, so that programs like Head Start were useless and should be replaced by vocational training. It is disingenuous of Mr. Weyher to claim that the Fund does not take positions on political issues and stays "strictly and totally hands off," when in fact the Fund continues to support researchers with this kind of agenda.

(2) According to the Lane article cited above, Mr.Weyher was personally recruited by Wickliffe Draper, whose wealth was used to establish the Fund, to help "wage scientific battle against" the *Brown* decision. A future director of the Fund, Henry Garrett, was a featured witness for the segregationists in the course of the *Brown* litigation.

With respect to the letter from Roger Pearson, it is interesting that the same Henry Garrett is identified in the *New York Review* article as one of the founders of *Mankind Quarterly*. The article provides further information about the first editor of the journal, Robert Gayre, its present publisher (Mr. Pearson), and its content over the years since its founding in 1960. Because of space limitations, I must refer readers to the two issues of *NYR* cited above for further enlightenment. JACK FISCHEL

Shambles at the border

Libertyville, Ill.

To the Editors: Your editorial "Reform or Resentment" [January 13] makes the unwarranted insinuation that the California voters who supported Proposition 187 are mean-spirited or bigoted. I suggest that for every mean-spirited supporter of 187 there is an equal or greater number of Californians resisting reform for self-serving reasons. It doesn't seem fitting that these people, who only want cheap labor, should mount a moral high horse on this issue. The present situation along the border is a shambles. It is injurious to the dignity of two great nations. What the pro-187 voters want is an orderly, fair process of immigration. JOHN FLOENER

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A counter-offer

Washington, D.C.

To the Editors: In response to "A Modest Proposal" [December 2, 1994], which suggests that embryo researchers should conduct their experiments only on embryos they themselves and their spouses have produced, I too have a modest proposal:

The writer of that article should join with doctors and scientists in a hospital ward for premature births and watch as hundreds of living, feeling, thinking, moving children die because science does not yet have the understanding to save them. It is clear that when a child's life is weighed against a collection of human cells, even one life is worth thousands of embryos. We are not talking about a human hamster living and breathing in a cage; we are talking about cells in the earliest stage of development.

Would scientists be willing to give their own cells to research, as your writer dares them to do? Clearly, they would, because they value a human baby over a human embryo. The writer confused the two. A baby can move and think and feel; an embryo is confined to a petri dish. Of course, any research that can be accomplished on nonhumans should be done on other animals. That is the plan of the National Institutes of Health. Of course, any research on embryos should be done only with donor approval. That too is NIH's plan. If one breathing, feeling baby dies because a human embryo is valued over a child's life, that is a tragedy. ELI COHEN

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Inventing our names, our selves

CLIFF THOMPSON

Not long ago my wife told me that she'd heard a woman in our neighborhood calling after her daughter, "Come here, Shaquana!" My wife and I chuckled over the name, which sounded distinctly made-up. Then I said, "I guess I don't have to ask about the woman's race." When I received no reply, I knew I'd been right: the woman was black, as am I.

My reaction was born of the fact that, at thirty-one, I am a member of the last generation of black Americans whose parents didn't give them names like Shaquana or Chaico. I grew up in predominantly black Washington, D.C., around older relatives with names like Pamela, Harry, and Catherine; I attended school with Roberts, Lisas, and Darryls. It wasn't until the late 1970s, when the book and then the television miniseries "Roots" hit the black community with the force of a flood, that young parents began naming their children Kunta and Kizzy after Alex Haley's ancestors. From there, it was but a short step to choosing monikers that sounded just as exotic but were, unlike Kunta and Kizzy, the products of parents' imaginations. More conservative blacks—including my family and, in those days, myself—either laughed, or shook their heads, or, like me, did both.

And yet my own head was shaken, I think now, out of a secret respect. I don't mean that I respect a parent's right to name a child anything she wants; I believe there are some combinations of syllables that should not go on anyone's birth certificate, period. Examples? Growing up, I knew a man, Mr. Williams, who came up with the idea of naming his kids after certain bodies of water. Inspiration doesn't come cheap, and in this case the price was paid by two of his children—Erie and Superior. My cousin, a woman not given to telling tall tales, swears she attended school with a boy named Constipated Greene. Such names might potentially, if not inherently, spell disaster for the people forced to go through even part of their lives with them.

But the case of Shaquana (that's how I spell it; how the girl herself spells it, I'll most likely never know) is different. When people in a wealthy society are denied access to a piece of the pie, as African-Americans traditionally have been, there arises among them a desire to create, to the extent possible, their own society, with its own rules. Certainly, lack of economic opportunity is a primary factor in the tendency of so many young men to turn to the illegal drug trade. I don't condone their actions—but I understand the impulse that leads to them.

I don't think it's too much of a stretch to say that the same impulse manifests itself, much more benignly, in names such as Shaquana. Calling oneself or one's child Shaquana says nothing if not, "This is my name. Not yours—*mine*." And why not? Is this not the United States of America, a nation founded by people who didn't like the way England was run and couldn't speak the language anywhere else? History provides several examples of successful, influential people who gave *themselves* previously unheard-of names. Malcolm X comes to mind. So does the group that altered the course of popular music and had as its name a made-up word, one that wins the prize for weakest pun in the history of the English language. (*Beatles* sounds like bugs, but it's spelled with an a, as in beat, as in music...clever, huh?)

Besides: a name like Eric (which I happen to like; it's my nephew's name) was made up, too. The only difference is that it was made up untold centuries ago, by people who thought the world was flat, if they thought about such things at all, and it came to mean something more. Why is the name Eric, then, innately better than, say, Saften, or Boruka? Innately, it isn't.

So, should I have restrained myself from laughing at the oddness of the name Shaquana? Or been surprised at the fact that I immediately identified the race of the person it belonged to? I don't think so. Last year, I laughed my head off at a "Saturday Night Live" skit, "Phil McCracken, Scottish Therapist," that poked fun at the supposedly fiery nature of Scottish people. My subsequent lack of guilt was due, I believe, to the fact that no one questions (or should question, anyway) the stature of Scots. Perhaps more tellingly, I once had a Jewish friend who chuckled over the fact that he'd met a woman named Israel. When he said something to the effect of "*Guess we know what she is, huh?*," my friend's smile indicated something more than his amusement: a certain pride, a certain identification: Those people of mine!

I believe that when we feel guilty over chuckling at a name such as Shaquana, what we are really saying to ourselves is, *Come on. Pick on somebody your own size*, as if we black people have not proved ourselves in countless instances to be a tough, smart, accomplished bunch. Historically, a deprived group that gives its children made-up names rather than bending to tradition and choosing Anglo-derived ones must be tough, resourceful, and proud. It's another way of saying: "*You want somebody your own size? You've found him.*" □

Cliff Thompson is a fiction writer and an associate editor of Current Biography.

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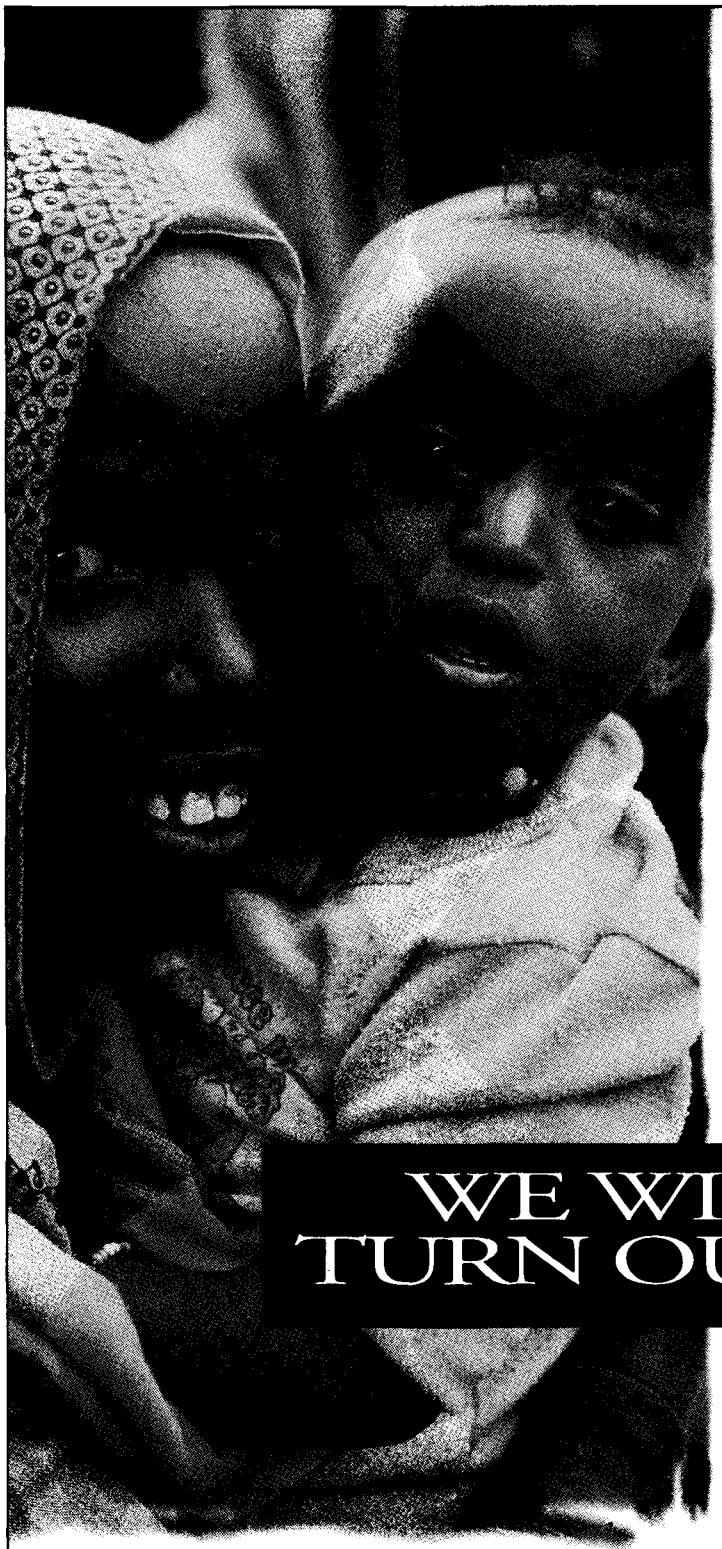

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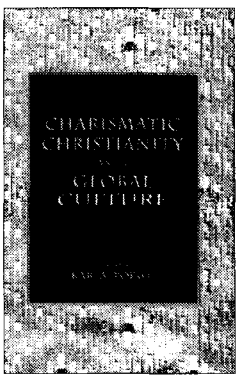

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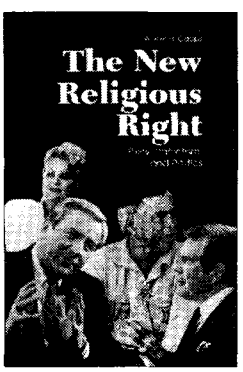

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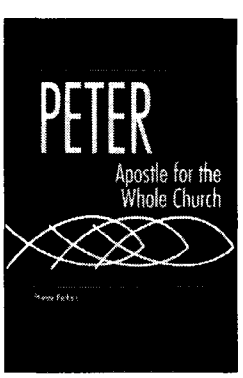

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